

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BROWN COUNTY
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Pursuant to Section 19.84 Wis. Stats., a special meeting of the **Brown County Public Safety Committee** was held on Wednesday, January 18, 2012 in Room 200, Northern Building, 305 East Walnut Street, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Present: Chair Tom De Wane, Tim Carpenter, Patrick Buckley, Andy Nicholson, Dave Kaster

Excused:

Also Present: Supervisor Zima, Supervisor Scray, John Gossage, Don Hein, Todd Delain, Fred Mohr, Debbie Klarkowski, Karl Fleury, Other Interested Parties

I. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair De Wane at 5:02 p.m.

II. Approve/Modify Agenda

Motion made by Supervisor Buckley, seconded by Supervisor Zima to approve. Vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Sheriff:

- 1. Budget Adjustment Request (#12-02): Increase in expenses with offsetting increase in revenue.**

This request is to increase overtime and fringe benefits to participate in a Wisconsin DOT BOTS OWI (Alcohol) Enforcement patrol program through September, 2012. Increased expenses are offset by grant revenue. Match is required but will be recovered by mileage and patrol hours generated by the Traffic Team. This grant is basically the same as alcohol enforcement grants in previous years.

Motion made by Supervisor Zima, seconded by Supervisor Buckley to approve. Vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- 2. Budget Adjustment Request (#12-03): Increase in expenses with offsetting increase in Revenue.**

This request is to increase overtime and fringe benefits to participate in a Wisconsin DOT BOTS Seat Belt Enforcement patrol program through September, 2012. Increased expenses will be offset by grant revenue. Match is required but will be covered by mileage and patrol hours generated by the Traffic Team.

Motion made by Supervisor Zima, seconded by Supervisor Buckley to approve. Vote taken.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- 3. Budget Adjustment Request (#12-04): Increase in expenses with offsetting increase in revenue.**

This request is to increase overtime and fringe benefits to participate in a Wisconsin DOT BOTS Speed Enforcement patrol program through September, 2012. Increased expenses are offset by

grant revenue. Match is required but will be covered by mileage and patrol hours generated by the Traffic Team. This grant is basically the same as alcohol enforcement grants in previous years.

Motion made by Supervisor Buckley, seconded by Supervisor Zima to approve. Vote taken.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Grant Application Review (#11-15): HS ALERT Bomb Squad Equipment.

This is a grant application for \$71,300 for HS Alert Bomb Squad Equipment. This includes the upgrade breaching kits and the Hawk Robot Sighting System with Cobra Laser PAN ring. This grant is given by the federal government to local bomb squads.

Motion made by Supervisor Buckley, seconded by Supervisor Zima to approve. Vote taken.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Public Safety Communications:

5. Budget Adjustment Request (#12-01): Increase in expenses with offsetting increase in revenue.

This is a grant for emergency management as relates to mass tragedies and more particularly patient tracking software which would keep track of victims and their belongings from EMS to the hospitals. The grant will be used to purchase equipment (scanning device and wireless card) and air time to participate in the program. Green Bay Fire Department will be the participating agency and will house the equipment.

Motion made by Supervisor Buckley, seconded by Supervisor Zima to approve. Vote taken.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. Budget Adjustment Request (#12-07): Increase in expenses with offsetting increase in revenue.

This is a port security grant that several agencies participate in through Brown County. Green Bay administers the grant. The grant funding will be used to purchase disaster communication equipment, linking interagency operations centers equipment, an outdoor wireless security camera kit and a Hazmat id system.

Motion made by Supervisor Buckley, seconded by Supervisor Zima to approve. Vote taken.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7. Grant Application Review (#11-16): Homeland Security IMT Equipment 11.

This is a grant for funding a statewide Incident Management Team.

Motion made by Supervisor Zima, seconded by Supervisor Buckley, to approve. Vote taken.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Other:

8. Review of Chapter 4.

Chair De Wane addressed those in attendance and stated that anyone interested in addressing the Committee would have an opportunity to do so.

Supervisor Zima asked Board Attorney Fred Mohr if hearing concerns of those in attendance could or would be construed as labor negotiations. Mohr responded that no negotiating can take place during this meeting and continued that the Public Safety Committee does not have any authority or jurisdiction to make any changes to Chapter 4. Any changes would need to be made by the Executive Committee. Mohr also pointed out that under the Walker Repair Bill, it is now illegal to negotiate these types of issues and he cautioned the Committee to listen only, and be careful of making any remarks that could be construed as negotiations.

Motion made by Supervisor Buckley, seconded by Supervisor Zima to open the floor for interested parties to speak. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Supervisor Buckley stated that he had received numerous e mails and phone calls with regard to Chapter 4. His view is that the employees have a right to be heard and if there were concerns, the Public Safety Committee could take those concerns to the Executive Committee.

At this time, Chair De Wane invited anyone interested in speaking to come forward.

-Pat Perez, 3028 Curry Lane, Green Bay, Wisconsin

-Heather Tiedtke, 3028 Curry Lane, Green Bay, Wisconsin

-Mary Lukes, 3028 Curry Lane, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Perez thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address them and provided the Committee with a handout, a copy of which is attached, which consisted of a study done by APCO, the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials, along with several letters. Perez, Tiedtke and Lukes are all employees of the Communication Center. Perez stated that they were at the meeting to ask the Public Safety Committee to recognize the essential role of the Brown County Public Safety Telecommunicators by defining their position as emergency service personnel. She pointed out that the Brown County Public Safety Communication Center is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days per year. They are the heart of the public safety circulatory system and are the lifeline to the field units. They are expected to be right 100 percent of the time so that the field units can make good decisions in their response to assist the citizens of Brown County and go home safely at the end of their shift.

Perez pointed out that Brown County meets or exceeds the APCO guidelines set forth in the packet. The study shows that the job cannot be filled by just anyone, but rather is a career choice that requires dedication to succeed. Telecommunicators respond to emergencies in real time and are responsible to the citizens of Brown County in that they are responsible for getting them the assistance they need. They have additional training in hostage negotiations, active shooter situations, domestic violence situations, terrorism situations, sex crimes and suicide intervention.

The other primary responsibility of the telecommunicators is to the officers, fire fighters and EMTs to give them the information they need to do their job well and come home safe.

Telecommunicators have an occupation where lives, property and responder safety is on the line daily and they are expected to improvise, adapt and overcome adversity as well as come up with creative solutions to problems. They work in an environment that requires multi-tasking and multi-processing, more fully described on Page 27 of the APCO study. There are also many mental challenges of the profession which are described on Page 34 of the study. Perez felt that all of these factors clearly indicate that Brown County telecommunicators and 911 dispatchers are more accurately described as emergency or essential personnel than categorized with County positions such as those that are clerical in nature and work a normal Monday through Friday week. A comparison between essential personnel and clerical personnel is more fully explained on Page 26 of the APCO study.

Perez challenged the Public Safety Committee to sit with the telecommunicators for a shift to see what exactly their job entails and she indicated that the Committee is welcome in the Communication Center any time of the day or night. She also pointed out that the Brown County Communication Center is known statewide as a leader in the industry and has been observed by a number of other counties.

Perez concluded by stating that they are asking the Committee to be the leaders in the county, state and nationally by recognizing the essential role of 911 telecommunicators and dispatchers in the public safety response by defining their positions as emergency personnel.

Mary Lukes read a memo from someone who was not able to attend the meeting that echoed many of the comments and concerns brought forth by Perez. A copy of this memo is attached.

Supervisor Carpenter arrived at 5:20 p.m.

Supervisor Buckley asked what the cost of training new employees is and Perez provided a breakdown, a copy of which is attached. It costs the County an average of \$76,800 to fully train each telecommunicator. She also indicated that since January 1, 2011 they have had 15 telecommunicators with a total of 99 years of experience leave the center. To train the 15 replacement telecommunicators at an average of four positions each, it will cost the County approximately \$1,152,000.00, not including training costs for specialized training as mentioned earlier or the overtime created by openings. The approximate training time for each position is three months.

It was indicated that of the 15 people who left the Communication Center, only one was a normal retirement. Zima asked HR Director Debbie Klarkowski if exit interviews were conducted and Klarkowski stated that a form is sent to employees after they leave employment and if the employee asks for a one-on-one exit interview, one will be set up. Zima felt that the exit interview should routinely be part of the condition of employment as we need to know the reasons people leave employment.

Supervisor Kaster arrived at 5:25 p.m.

Buckley asked what the average amount of overtime telecommunicators are currently working is, but Tiedtke indicated they do not get compensated at an overtime rate after working eight hour shifts due to the change in wording in Chapter 4 which indicates that they have to have 40 hours in a work week before overtime will be paid. Tiedtke pointed out that they work a

rotating schedule and therefore they may not reach 40 hours in a work week because the week gets split over two pay periods.

Attorney Mohr pointed out to the Committee that the old labor contract provided that overtime was only paid after 40 hours however, it was recently learned that that is not how it was administered and, in fact, overtime had been overpaid in the past. The actual contract language provided for overtime only after 40 hours per week and this has not changed in the rewrite of Chapter 4. Attorney Mohr quoted the addendum language that pertains only to telecommunicators' overtime as follows, "Employees shall be compensated at the rate of one and one-half times for overtime which shall be computed on the basis of premium pay for work performed in excess of 40 hours in any 5-2 or 5-3 cycle".

Supervisor Nicholson arrived at 5:30 p.m.

Mohr also wished to make the Committee aware that a statewide survey had been done as to when overtime kicks in for telecommunicators and jailers and what was discovered is that the vast majority do not pay overtime except under Fair Labor Standards which is a 40 hour work week.

Buckley asked if department heads had input when the Chapter 4 re-write was made and Mohr stated that all department heads, including Karl Fleury, met with HR to give input. Buckley then asked Fleury what input he gave to HR during the re-write process and further, if HR acknowledged the input. Fleury responded that he did have a meeting with HR reps and other similar 24/7 operations in which they discussed how functions for 24/7 operations would work. Fleury's concern was with "having a square peg put into a round hole" in that the Communication Center does not operate in a Monday through Friday 8:00 - 5:00 capacity. He felt there were a number of contingencies that needed to be examined and those concerns were voiced at the meeting. Fleury continued that a follow-up meeting was held in the Northern Building to go over Chapter 4 and similar issues were identified and brought back to the attention of HR at that time. Buckley asked if the concerns brought forward to HR were addressed in the Chapter 4 rewrite and Fleury responded that there are still some concerns and issues that may have not been addressed.

Sheriff Gossage stated that Capt. Konrath represented the Sheriff's Office in the meetings with HR. Konrath then came back to him with concerns and these concerns were expressed to HR. Gossage also stated that they did work with HR to get informational meetings for the employees with regard to Chapter 4 and he recalled that there were two such meetings. Capt. Malcomson had also been working with HR as to what the impact of Chapter 4 would be on the employees as they wanted to make sure that the employees had this explained to them and could speak with HR if they had any questions.

Buckley felt it might be easier to have separate Chapter 4s for administrative employees and those who work in departments staffed 24/7. Mohr stated that the County Board's direction was to make things as uniform as possible. Buckley asked Mohr when the County Board was given that direction as he was not able to recall and Mohr stated that it was discussed over the course of several months in closed session at Executive Committee.

Supervisor Nicholson asked Fleury if he had been provided with any simple comparisons from the old contract to the new Chapter 4 showing the employees what changes had been

proposed. Fleury responded that nothing had been presented in that manner and further stated that they had an employee meeting with HR at the center to address some of the questions and concerns and as they got information they put it out to the employees. He is also aware that HR is working on an employee handbook which will go further to answer some of the concerns and questions that remain. He stated that as he received questions, they were brought to HR in e-mail or phone calls and as information was received back from HR they tried to disseminate the information to the personnel. In hindsight he felt it may have been easier if they would have been presented with a total package and how it would impact operations instead of things coming out in piece mill fashion as issues arose. Fleury continued that he recalled from their discussions that they told HR the more information they could provide to their employees the better and smoother the transition would be as the rewrite had a huge impact on all County employees.

Klarkowski stated that every department head and their managers met with HR reps who spent hours going through every section of Chapter 4 and answering questions. She continued that in the case of Public Safety, in addition to herself meeting with Fleury and Shelly Nackers as well as all of the telecom operators, another HR rep met with Shelly Nackers and Karl Fleury and walked through every section of Chapter 4 before it was implemented. Klarkowski stated that all of these meetings took place in October and November, 2011. Klarkowski also met with the telecom operators and spent over two hours with them one afternoon. After that, Fleury and Nackers again met with representatives of HR.

Buckley asked Klarkowski what was discussed with the telecommunicators at the meeting referenced above and Klarkowski stated that they discussed whatever questions they had. At this point several members in attendance stated that this meeting took place after the fact and that they had asked for the meeting with HR. Klarkowski stated that this meeting would have been in the October/November timeframe and Chapter 4 was not implemented until January 1, 2012 when the bargaining agreements expired. Buckley asked if any employees were given the opportunity for input in the rewrite and Klarkowski stated that the focus groups involved all of the managers and department heads and they were given opportunity for input. If they had any input from their employees, it would have been expected that they would have brought it forward at the focus group meetings.

Buckley asked Fleury and Gossage if they are satisfied with the way the Chapter 4 rewrite was carried out. Gossage stated that he was aware of some concerns that Capt. Konrath and Capt. Malcomson presented to Klarkowski and his opinion is that there is a vast difference between the 24/7 employees and the administrative employees and there is inequity there. Fleury answered that for a 24/7 operation there are issues with Chapter 4. Buckley asked Klarkowski if she was aware of these issues and she stated that she was aware and has addressed them with Attorney Mohr and also asked the groups to write down the pros and cons of what was implemented so that they can sit down and discuss the concerns and take it back to Executive Committee. Klarkowski also stated that nobody is opposed to making changes, but they have asked the departments to implement Chapter 4 and work with the changes and then bring back their concerns.

Attorney Mohr reiterated his earlier comments that they did comparable studies and what was learned is that what Brown County has adopted in Chapter 4 is what is being implemented statewide for 24/7 employees. Buckley felt that the full County Board should have been made

aware if drastic changes were being made to Chapter 4 and not addressed only at the Executive Committee level.

Supervisor Carpenter asked if it would simply be easier to reclassify the telecom operators as emergency personnel and Mohr stated that that would not be a simple process at all as "emergency personnel" is a statutory definition and this would then become a legal question.

Kaster asked Klarkowski when Chapter 4 was implemented and Klarkowski answered that it went into effect on January 1 when the contracts expired. Kaster also confirmed with Klarkowski that meetings with department heads and managers were held in October and November, 2011. He recalled meetings when this was voted on at the Board level and at Executive Committee and he also recalled that it was voted on it with the idea that there could be changes later on with regard to the separate departments. Kaster continued that quite a few of the employees he talked to stated they did not realize what was going to happen and how it was going to fully affect them until it went into effect. Kaster asked if anyone in attendance addressed their issues with HR and Lukes answered that there were no focus groups whatsoever, regardless of what HR said. Kaster stated that HR stated that they met with the department heads with the idea that the department heads would spread the information down the line to the employees.

Supervisor Zima stated that Chapter 4 was a work in progress which began in February or March of 2011. When this issue came before the Executive Committee, administration had some objections about passing Chapter 4, but when asked what the objections were they did not receive input from managers or department heads. Several supervisors asked questions, but Zima did not feel there was anything substantive that anyone said should have been changed prior to implementation of Chapter 4. Zima also felt that it was up to the managers to bring information that they felt was important to their staff when it was received. Zima went on that if a department head feels there is some complaint that has merit, then the department head should bring it forward through the County Executive and the County Board and ask for the changes and then a decision can be made. Zima felt that due diligence had been done by HR staff and if those in attendance believe there are changes that should be considered then they need to bring it to their department head who should then bring it forward through his or her boss which would be the County Executive and the County Board.

-Mark Zeratsky, 3030 Curry Lane, Green Bay, Wisconsin addressed the Committee and stated that he had a couple of comments. First, he felt the meeting on December 22 with HR reps to go over Chapter 4 was more of listening session of HR telling the jail officers how Chapter 4 would work. Second, is a problem he has with regard to the interpretation of the holiday pay language. He felt they were told one thing by HR and something else by the HR director. Chapter 4 states that everyone gets eight hours of pay for holiday but then goes on to say that all actual hours worked on the holiday will be paid at double time. He interprets that as the hours that are actually worked on the holiday are to be paid at double time; however, what they are being told now is that you are paid straight time for the hours worked on a holiday and therefore there is no additional pay given to an employee who works on a holiday.

Mohr clarified this and stated that in Chapter 4 there are two separate paragraphs that apply to this. One scenario is for employees who are not scheduled to work on a holiday and that provides that if you are not scheduled to work on the holiday, you will receive pay for that day. However, if you are scheduled to work on the holiday, you will receive double time.

-Greg Engles, 3030 Curry Lane, Green Bay, Wisconsin added that every employee of Brown County gets eight hours of holiday pay for a holiday. He stated that if a jail officer works on the holiday, they get eight hours of regular pay so really, they are not getting anything extra for working the holiday. Mohr stated that that is not true and went on that if your off day falls on that holiday, you get the regular pay. If you are scheduled to work on that holiday, you get your regular pay, plus the additional eight hours of pay which equals being paid double time for the holiday.

The discussion with regard to holiday pay continued but was inaudible at times due to the number of people talking at the same time.

-Lauri Maki, 3028 Curry Lane, Green Bay, Wisconsin stated that if he works on Christmas and another employee does not, the person that does not work will make eight hours of holiday pay, however when he works he will also make eight hours of holiday pay as well as eight hours of straight pay for working, but they are both still only receiving eight hours of holiday pay.

-Clint Pelischek, 3030 Curry Lane, Green Bay, Wisconsin pointed out that administrative employees got Monday off for New Years and received eight hours of pay for that day even though the actual holiday fell on a Sunday. However, if jail officers work, they get their straight pay, plus the eight hours of holiday, so they are not coming out ahead as they do not get a day off like everyone else in the county. His opinion is that if a holiday falls on a day off such as the weekend, then the administrative employees should not receive a day off to compensate for the holiday falling on their day off.

The discussion with regard to holiday pay continued, however, at this point was again inaudible due to the number of people talking at the same time.

Buckley felt that there were some issues that did not get handled appropriately in the rewrite process and stated that he will put in a communication at the County Board meeting later in the evening to request a rewrite of Chapter 4 for 24/7 employees and he felt this new rewrite needs to be done with employee input, department head input and HR input.

Dewane thanked everyone for coming and sympathized with their frustration and stated that he appreciated everything that all of them do for the county. He also reminded them that they can call their county supervisor at any time to express any concerns they have at any time.

-Jessie Stein, 3028 Curry Lane, Green Bay, Wisconsin stated that she understands that comparables from other counties needed to be taken into consideration, but also reminded the Committee that the benefit package they have is helping to draw dispatchers from other areas to Brown County.

-Ken Wiedenbauer, 3028 Curry Lane, Green Bay, Wisconsin referred to an earlier discussion where it was brought up that employees were leaving the Brown County dispatch center for what was possibility thought to be higher paying jobs. He stated that not one person left for a higher paying job but some of the departures were due to uncertainty of how the new Chapter 4 would affect employment.

Motion made by Supervisor Buckley, seconded by Supervisor Carpenter to return to regular business. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9. Audit of bills.

No action taken.

10. Such other matters as authorized by law.

**Motion made by Supervisor Nicholson, seconded by Supervisor Kaster to adjourn at 6:39 p.m.
Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Respectfully submitted,

Therese Giannunzio
Recording Secretary

Germantown Police Department Wisconsin

A note from Chief Pete Hoell to all Communication Officers.

Having been married to and worked with emergency services dispatchers for a long time it has inspired me to write this. I think many people may feel that a police dispatcher's job is a safe and secure job because they are located in a dispatch center safe and secure from the direct threat of the call they are dispatching. I have learned that to be furthest from the truth. In order to understand this, we must see through the eyes, hear through the ears and feel through the heart of a dispatcher. A dispatcher is the link between the caller and the officer. They are directly involved in the call. They take on the responsibility for the safety and security of the caller and the officer, the caller is asking them for help and it is their job to find them the help they need. When they dispatch the officer to a call, it is not simply dispatching an officer; they are sending one of "their" officers into harm's way. They feel a sense of responsibility to keep their "guys" safe. They know that the amount of information they obtain for the officer is critical to the officer's safety. I have come to learn that even though the dispatcher may not physically be at the call with the officer, they are there mentally; they are there with him/her and they feel the stress of the unknown. And god forbid something goes wrong with the call, or the incident is very tragic and or horrific, psychologically a dispatcher is directly involved and mentally they are there with the officer(s). There are also those calls where tragedy occurs while the caller is on line with the dispatcher, those calls always come with the "what could I have done to have changed the outcome of the call" the majority of the time there is nothing a dispatcher could have done differently, but the weight of the tragedy they have just been exposed to is still very real. Experts say that during WWII more soldiers were lost to the psychological impact of war than to the physical injuries. So even though a dispatcher may not be exposed to the physical tragedy of the call, the psychological dangers are very real and just as damaging. I am very grateful for those willing to put themselves on the line and expose themselves to the dangers of emergency services dispatching. It is truly an occupation in which the dangers are unrepresented.

County Executive
Brown County Supervisors
305 East Walnut Street
Green Bay, WI 54305

January 1, 2012

Scot Knutson
772 Woodrow Street
Denmark, WI 54208

Dear County Executive Steckenbach and County Supervisors;

My name is Scot Knutson and am a Police Officer for the Village of Denmark. I write this letter in support of the Brown County Dispatchers.

I have been advised that the Brown County dispatchers have been re-classified as non-emergency employees. I believe this is a mistake that should be cleared up immediately. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary a emergency is; "an unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state that calls for immediate action or an urgent need for assistance or relief" and a dispatcher is; "to send off or away with promptness or speed". Without one you DO NOT have the OTHER!

"Emergency dispatchers are the first to hear of an emergency. It is their responsibility to inform the police, fire/or rescue of the situation. They also help callers with lifesaving information such as CPR, until police arrive. While the emergency personnel are out on the scene, the dispatcher tracks the movements of each vehicle to ensure that everyone arrives. If an officer is lost, the dispatcher is charged with giving the proper directions to the scene. In addition the dispatcher relays important information, such as victim at gun point, to alert all officer and paramedics to the type of environment they are responding to".

In the unforeseen circumstances that lay in front of us there has to be some unity and not separation by reclassifying these dedicated, highly trained, valuable employees you have successfully done this. Only you can change the outcome. I hope that the bell can be silenced and you could settle the differences that have come forward.

In January of 2010 the Brown County Dispatcher Center received a frantic call from a loved on screaming for help. Her husband of many years had gone into cardiac arrest and was pleading for help. These dedicated employees sprung into action gave vital life-saving information all while dispatching police and rescue personnel. I am happy to announce that her husband is alive and the caller is now a EMT-Basic with County Rescue and works out of the Denmark Viking Rescue squad. We made a difference and save a life because they responded to the emergency.

Respectfully yours,

Scot Knutson

Public Safety Communications: The Lifeline Of Public Safety

The Status Of The Profession, Challenges Faced
And The Need For Change.



APCO International
August 2011

Second Edition

**Reported by
APCO ProCHRT
Professional Communications
Human Resources Taskforce**

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**THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIR
SUPPORT AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO MAKE THIS REPORT POSSIBLE**

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FOREWORD

In 2009 the APCO Executive Board established the ProCHRT taskforce to deal with the various human resources issues that plague America's communications centers. Items such as basic training requirements, proper shift work alignment and years of service required to receive a full retirement are but a few of the issues that ProCHRT has studied. This report is the aggregate result of two years of in-depth research, interviews and surveys designed to identify the key human resource issues that adversely affect our telecommunicator workforce.

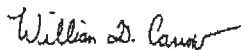
It is hard to believe that in 2011 the employees that perform plumbing and electrical work in your home or office are required to maintain training certifications, while in the majority of states our telecommunicators are not required to be trained to any standard. In today's society there is an expectation from the public that when they call 9-1-1 that a trained professional call receiver will answer their call for help and a trained radio dispatcher will send the appropriate help to an emergency scene.

The taskforce members are to be commended for their extraordinary work in collecting specific information from chapters. Chapter members from Florida, Arkansas and West Virginia did a fantastic job in ushering training bills through their respective legislatures over the past two years. The Montana Chapter has made major strides in their fight for parity in retirement, and though they have not had a bill pass, the APCO name is well known and the Montana Chapter will no doubt be successful in the future.

The communications call receivers and dispatchers are the public safety nucleus. Without them, no police vehicles will respond, no fire trucks will roll and no medical help will respond to emergency scenes. These jobs are highly technical in nature and the job cannot be performed by just anybody. As standards are established, the profession will also be elevated.

The first two years of study by the taskforce is documented within this report. As you read this report, please be thinking of who you can share it with in your state, county or locality. Your help is needed in order to spread the word regarding the jobs performed by over 200,000 professionals on a daily basis. These are our true first, first responders.

Sincerely,



William D. Carrow
President, APCO-International

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2009, the Association of Public-Safety Communication Officials International (APCO) established a task force to specifically review human resource challenges affecting 9-1-1 Public Safety Communication Centers (PSCC) across the country. In 2010, at the APCO International Conference held in Houston, Texas, an interim report was published by the task force which took into consideration and reported on all of the data collected which included a comprehensive review of state mandated training requirements, salary & benefits available to the men and women performing critical services to all communities in this country and provided a national grade based upon the information collected.

The initial report reflected an overall grade of F based upon the information available at its publication. A year later, there has been some progress, but the progress is still insufficient to consistently, comprehensively, and sufficiently support the critical mission and public safety communications professionals. The overall grade remains at an F.

NATIONAL GRADE BY CATEGORY	
STATE MANDATED TRAINING REQUIREMENTS	C-
INSERVICE OPPORTUNITIES	N/A
EMD	D
SALARY & BENEFITS	F
OVERALL	F

The individuals who manage PSCCs throughout the United States are confronted every day with challenges associated with the human resource aspect of PSCC operations. Operations in a center are pass or fail, leaving no margin for errors requiring optimal levels of operations 24 hours a day because lives, property and responder safety are on the line every minute of every day.

The "National Grade by Category" represented has sought to represent the *national* view of the identified human resource need based upon the overall support from a national and statewide perspective. No national mandated training requirements supporting the 9-1-1 public safety communications professional exist and **no** state was found to mandate training requirements which meet or exceed the Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators.



•The nation receives an F in their support of public safety communications...
America deserves better.

We recognize that many localities and agencies have developed a comprehensive training program which meets or exceeds the Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators for initial training; however, there is insufficient information at this writing to place a grade to in-service and/or continuing education opportunities.

Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD) is repeatedly found to be a local initiative with little or no support from a national or individual state

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perspective. Retirement benefits commensurate with the public safety contribution of these individuals are non-existent.

We can only conclude that the nation would rank an F in their ability to support and recognize the professionals in public safety communications. It does not and is not meant to measure the quality of services provided by 9-1-1 PSCCs – rather, it considers the legislative, regulatory and work environments, the existing infrastructure related to personnel, and the available trained and qualified workforce that constitute the PSCC which is relied upon every day by citizens as well as public safety responders.

The findings in this report should raise concern in every locality and state in the country. It should raise awareness and concern to legislatures both at the state and federal levels. Improvements relative to many human resource issues within the PSCC will most likely require a different mindset of the critical nature of these individuals and will most likely require legislative change(s), etc.

HISTORY

This taskforce was established by APCO as a result of growing concern amongst PSCC professionals about the many challenges faced daily in the nation's PSCCs. They include:

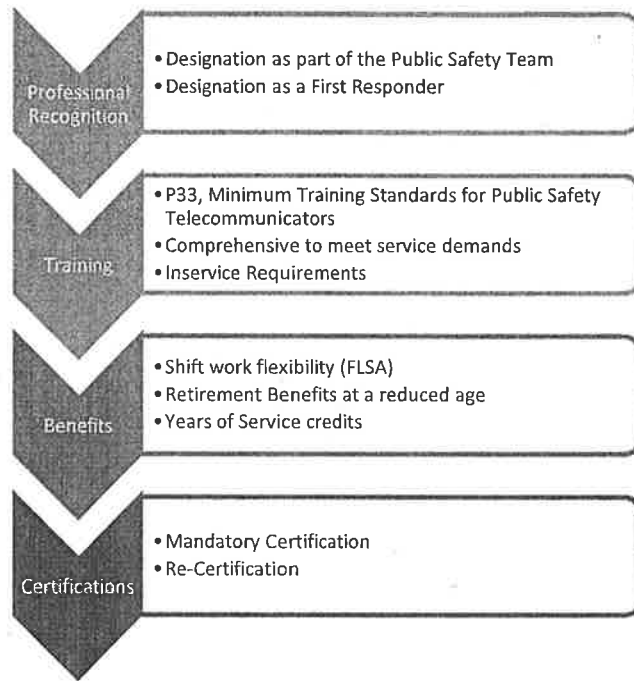
- ☒ The lack of appreciation and recognition for the critical nature of services provided by these dedicated men and women;
- ☒ An obvious disparity in wages commensurate with the duties and demands of the job without due consideration for the technical skills and abilities needed to successfully complete assigned tasks.
- ☒ A lack of standards supporting the critical nature of the profession and professional.
- ☒ A failure of state, local, and federal governmental entities to allocate and appropriate funding to ensure continuity of operations, quality of service, and provide adequate resources and technology.
- ☒ A discerned understanding of the need to facilitate excellent training, providing on-going and in-service training to maintain 9-1-1 service levels to meet public expectations;
- ☒ The ability to provide for and retain qualified staff is not adequately addressed across the country.

These challenges have plagued PSCC professionals and the industry for far too many years and continue, in many cases, to be unresolved thereby putting the nation's 9-1-1 capabilities in jeopardy.

- Why are PSCC professionals not formally considered part of the *public safety* effort in this country? Why are PSCC professionals not considered *first responders*? These individuals are the *very first* part of the 'response' to any emergency and remain a critical part of the subsequent public safety emergency 'response' to its conclusion. Everywhere in between these professionals support the citizen in need and the public safety responder, coordinating additional resources, managing communications, etc.

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- Why is more not attention paid to the training and certification/re-certification of 9-1-1 calltakers, law enforcement, fire-rescue, and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) dispatchers and those that supervise them?
- What can be done through the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to provide for scheduling flexibility in a manner similar to those provided our partner public safety agencies?
- What needs to be done, considering the extraordinarily demanding and stressful environment of 9-1-1 public safety communications to reduce the required years of service before personnel are eligible to retire to align the profession with other public safety professionals?

PURPOSE

In 2009, APCO President Bill Carrow established, with the support of APCO's Board of Directors, the Professional Communications Human Resources Taskforce (ProCHRT). During the past two years, the Taskforce has gathered information, reviewed, studied, and compared existing data from across the country. This report is intended to help educate the APCO membership and other interested parties on the state of human resource and staffing challenges. More specifically to those individuals who staff the 9-1-1 PSCCs, answering the approximately 260,000 9-1-1 and emergency calls made daily while dispatching and providing safety and support to other public safety responders.

Identified challenges include professional recognition, training and certification requirements, the use of and compliance with industry specific standards, and retirement eligibility. The aforementioned challenges should be of national concern to localities, states, and the nation which, directly or indirectly, affect every PSCC in the nation.

OVERVIEW

This document seeks to provide insight and promote awareness of the profession which is paramount to the safety of the U.S. public, in the air, on the ground and on its seas. The public safety communications professional (referred to as Telecommunicators, Dispatchers,

• All law enforcement officers and Fraternal Order of Police members depend and rely on 911 Dispatchers as our life line each and every shift. The voice on the other end of the radio must handle every emergency and stressful situation. Our members and the public depend on the 911 system for their safety. We appreciate the hard work of these individuals and offer our support of this legislation.
Florida FOP



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Communication Officers, etc.) are the first of the first responders, the lifeline between the emergency call and the response of the public safety community. Many do not know or have chosen not to recognize these individuals as first responders or part of the public safety community.

The contents of this document provide a comprehensive review of the difficult tasks these individuals successfully execute every day along with the many challenges and personal impact the job has on them and the profession, from hiring and retention, training and/or lack of certification, to the impact of a very stressful environment on the individual and the agency.

A glimpse of the research conducted to date in support of the taskforce's conclusions and recommendations is included in this report. The results of this research will be provided electronically in a toolbox made available free to APCO members as a ready reference as they each, as a profession or as an individual may use to continue the promotion of insight and awareness. This toolbox will include useful resources, documents, sample letters, templates, etc. to help in promoting the public safety communication professional wherever and whenever possible.

It is the hope of this taskforce that the information contained herein will continue to be monitored and that this document become a gauge in monitoring the profession.

BACKGROUND

9-1-1 Public Safety Communications works closely with Law Enforcement, Fire-Rescue and Emergency Medical Services every day. 9-1-1 is the gateway through which virtually every emergency is reported resulting in communications center personnel being the first to assist citizens in their time of need while simultaneously dispatching appropriate resources.

However, public safety communications professionals are not afforded nor required to have a similar level of training, certification, and benefits as their comrades in public safety. The vast majority of communications personnel in this country have to work 30 or more years to receive a full retirement benefit, yet the stress of the job routinely precludes employees from completing their career and achieving retirement.

From the 2005 APCO Project RETAINS¹ (**Responsive Efforts To Address Integral Needs in Staffing**) study, it is estimated that 97 % of public safety communications personnel **WILL NOT** work in the profession long enough to retire. It is also estimated that 97 % of Law Enforcement and Fire- Rescue personnel **WILL** work long enough to retire. The national turnover rate for public safety communications in 2005 was 17%, and this rate increased to 19% in 2009.²

According to the 2005 study, a predictor of retention and satisfaction are working conditions, specifically providing personnel with the tools they need, i.e., training. Reducing turnover and retaining staff that is not only competent, but also a good organizational fit, can help increase the retention rate. In order to attract the most viable and well-suited candidates, this profession must continue to seek professionalization, maintain appropriate staffing levels, provide certified, and continuing education, and ensure professionals have all of the tools and resources needed to effectively execute their responsibilities.

¹ For more information about APCO Project RETAINS, please visit www.apcoretains.org.

² Ibid.

A finding of the 9-1-1 Industry Alliance in 2008 states, "Policymakers must be more vigilant to ensure that available 9-1-1 resources are used for their dedicated purposes."³ Although efforts identified in the report were geared towards the outdated infrastructure and systems utilized to support 9-1-1, the raiding of funds is also having a significant impact on funding provided for the localities to have sufficient staffing to meet the needs and demands of the community.

If an agency has too few staff, or staff is stretched in too many directions, the best and most costly 9-1-1 system will serve little purpose if the call goes unanswered. The "Human Factor" of Public Safety Communications is an element too often overlooked, under-emphasized, under-appreciated, and minimized when staffing requests are made.

97%
of public safety
communications
personnel **WILL**
NOT work long
enough to
retire.

Staffing in many PSCCs would, by all public expectations, be considered understaffed. You may believe a news story from KFOXTV in El Paso, Texas in which a City Representative responded to 911 complaints as an anomaly.⁴ A call to 9-1-1 from a citizen as fire consumed his El Paso home was not responded to. It reportedly took 14 minutes before he spoke to a dispatcher. It's not the public safety communications professional's unwillingness to answer the call, but the volume of calls and the ability of staffing levels to manage all emergencies all of the time.

The expectation of the citizen in this instance was, "I would assume that someone would answer the phone within the first or second ring."⁵ Based upon current technologies, the phone may ring 1-2 times on the caller's end before it rings in the PSCC. This perceived delay, part of processing a call, ensures the proper routing of calls.

In many ways, the "9-1-1 system has not kept pace with the nation's rapidly changing communication habits. As it ages, it is cracking, with problems like system overload, understaffing, misrouted calls, and bug-ridden databases leading to unanswered calls and dangerous errors."⁶

Even though some progress has been made in recent years in having some public safety communications personnel recognized as *First Responders*, it is the exception not the rule. When dealing with work schedules, the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) excludes public safety communication professionals from the ability to work a more condensed and efficient work week. In addition to the varying types of governance models, there is a wide variety of how schedules are configured with shift lengths varying from 8, 10, 12, and 24 hours. There is even a difference in the definition of full time (37 vs. 40 hours) or even how employees will complete 80 hours in two weeks. Our research has shown that most states predominantly follow federal labor laws, there are many state laws and ordinances across the nation which can impact work schedule.⁷

³ 91A Study on the Health of the US 9-1-1 System, 9-1-1 Industry Alliance, 2008, http://www.911alliance.org/publications/download_report.cfm.

⁴ New York Times, April 6, 2007.

⁵ ibid

⁶ ibid

⁷ For a complete list of labor laws by state, please see state information in the appendix.

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WHO WE ARE

What is a Public Safety Communications Center? PSCCs are “mission control” for public safety; the central point from which all public safety services are managed. Did you know that not all of these centers are made alike? There is no cookie-cutter mold for these facilities. Each is unique to its community, to its oversight, services, societal expectations, policies, service area, and population. Some are primary (*they only take calls*), some are secondary (*calls are transferred in and then dispatched*), some are consolidated (*either combined into one agency or many agencies working together in one building*) while others stand alone.

Few centers are standalone departments within a locality, instead oversight is provided by other departments within localities; some by local law enforcement departments, some by local fire agencies, some by local IT departments, and some are even outside contracted for services. These management structures serve to provide the necessary oversight; however, it also contributes to the lack of funding, the lack of recognition, and the lack of commensurate pay for the job. This critical public safety function must compete for resources and funding as much as, if not more, than other public safety disciplines.

We have evolved into a very skilled profession, but the recognition of this evolution has not kept pace. The ability of these professionals to adapt to ever-changing situations and technology speaks volumes to the knowledge, skills and abilities required to fill this position. In the past 30 years, public safety communications has so vastly changed, seeing the introduction of technology to perform daily duties. Basic requirements to be a public safety telecommunicator started with a phone, radio, pencil and paper, and had now become a complex and dynamic infrastructure involving trunks, radio towers, fiber optics, and multi-screened consoles.

You would be hard-pressed to find another profession which has experienced such changes and required learning curves as public safety communications. Yet, this profession falls into obscurity – the invisible component of public safety. How many children dress up as public safety telecommunicators for Halloween? What would this costume look like?

If the public calls 9-1-1, they expect to reach the fire or police department. It's not only that the public is not aware, but also local governance fails to recognize the critical nature of the job and the profession. Without this awareness, how can we stop 9-1-1 funds raiding? How can we ensure the proper infrastructure for training and funding?

FINDINGS

The initial findings of the 2010-2011 Report Card present a picture of a significant lack in many states and local jurisdictions for mandated, comprehensive training, including providing EMD pre-arrival instruction and associated certifications for 9-1-1 public safety communications personnel.....who everyday staff the gateway through which the approximately 260,000 9-1-1 calls made daily in the United States pass. That equates to approximately 240 million calls to 9-1-1 annually. Some of these states and jurisdictions require more training and certification to be an auto mechanic, hair stylist or manicurist than to be a 9-1-1 Call Taker or Law Enforcement, Fire Rescue and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) dispatcher, who every day, 24 hours a day, are confronted with making instantaneous decisions and providing lifesaving advice and instruction, to citizens in their most critical time of need.

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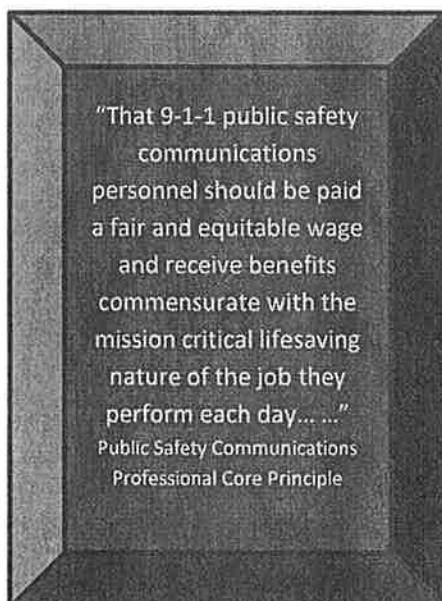
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However, there are other states and jurisdictions that have done a good job at recognizing the criticality of those positions and the expectation citizens have when calling 9-1-1. Current and emerging technologies being utilized within the centers are placing additional demands upon staff. The overall initial findings, if this were a final report card would result in a grade of D. As ProCHRT continues its work and analyzes its initial findings, it is hoped that, given the importance of 9-1-1 to **EVERY** citizen in the US.....that those states and jurisdictions will move quickly to improve and/or initiate mandated comprehensive training, certification, and EMD pre-arrival medical advice programs. The top areas of need and/or concern across the nation include:

- Need for comprehensive Mandated Training and Certification.
- Need for ongoing in-service training required to ensure skills and knowledge are maintained and continually updated.
- Need for EMD pre-arrival instruction programs to be adopted in every state and utilized by every public safety communications center.
- Limited access to improved retirement benefits commensurate with the high stress of the 9-1-1 profession in relation to other public safety personnel.
- Restraints imposed by the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) on the ability to scheduled personal in relation to other public safety personnel.
- Continuing challenge of attracting highly qualified personnel the 9-1-1 profession and retaining them and the experience gained.
- Recognizing 9-1-1 personnel by title, training, certification, salary, and benefits as fully fledged members of the public safety First Responder continuum..... because every public safety response begins with a call to the Public Safety Communications Professional via 9-1-1 or other means.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE NATION

What are the expectations of callers, related disciplines and colleagues of the 9-1-1 public safety communications profession?



The hiring processes in the PSCCs are solely within the discretion of the authority having jurisdiction. The public does expect that individuals working in the PSCC will have the same high moral and ethical values as fire & law enforcement professionals. These individuals, in many cases but not all, are required to undergo the same detailed and thorough pre-employment testing and screening, including a detailed background search, psychological & personality testing as well as polygraph and skills test.

This is not often achieved in positions where the value of the tasks assigned is not appropriately valued. The other mitigating factors are resources (funding for all of the testing and required technology) and the need to fill a seat. In doing so, agencies often fail to adequately train and/or certify their personnel and provide an equitable wage similar to other public safety professionals.

The aggravator to the expectation is that the public is not privy to all of

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the dynamics and funding status of the center; they either do not know about communications or do not know where to look for the information. Their primary concern is when they are in an emergency; they want to reach a competent person who will get a responding unit to them as quickly as possible. 9-1-1 is often viewed as an expectation rather than a service. Does the public consider that public safety communications must receive the same consideration in funding as other disciplines? If there are more fire trucks and law enforcement officers, there is a higher demand on communications to bridge the public to the disciplines. This higher demand equates into the need for more staff and more equipment.

A public safety communications professional is a highly skilled position that has no real test to gauge success beside whether a life is saved or not. The associated stress of this position, daily & cumulative, is not often considered in public expectation. The lack of recognition of how these professionals work with other public safety disciplines to protect and serve the public is a detracting factor to keeping the quality personnel needed. Part of this can be contributed to the lack of awareness, standards, and certifications as well as all the plethora of ways in which centers are configured. It is incumbent upon professionals in these positions to educate the public, their public safety partners, decision makers, and legislators of what are reasonable expectations and how we can all work together to maintain a high level of service in public safety.

This high level of service will only occur if the nation's 9-1-1 infrastructure becomes a priority and if recognition of the profession and its needs are met. An aging 9-1-1 infrastructures still permits the primitive 9-1-1 call to go through. Technology exists today and will continue to evolve to improve the country's 9-1-1 system to allow for the processing of texted 9-1-1 messages, relay video and data, and trace cellphone calls from remote areas. Some improvements have been in the planning and development stages for years; however, many funds collected through traditional wireline phone service and today's wireless communication networks to improve infrastructure are diverted to meet budget shortfalls.

There are many instances where federal funds are available to assist local fire departments and law enforcement agencies in staffing their forces, yet these funds are not available to support staffing in PSCCs. If not available at the state or local level, additional funding is limited or non-existent. It is critical to the entire public safety system that the PSCC with its need for current and up-to-date technology to allow for the efficient delivery and processing of 9-1-1 calls, computer systems that efficiently call on the proper and quickest response from the public safety system, and staff members trained so that anywhere in the country the delivery of 9-1-1 expected services are met *on every call, every day, from every device.*

UNDERSTANDING OUR OBSTACLES...

In order to effect lasting change, we need to understand what our obstacles are and how we can overcome them. As has been reiterated multiple times throughout this report, more training is needed. This means training must be standardized and made available to all public safety communications professionals. Standards are beginning to emerge, but they are not always accepted and incorporated in policies. Through the standardization of how individuals are trained, what continued education must be required and resources they should seek out, more credibility will come to the profession. In turn, liability will decrease.

Standardization of training will help to overcome another obstacle – lack of recognition. **Public safety communications should be seen as a full partner of public safety.** If there is an emergency, all disciplines work in

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concert to protect the public. However, if the professionals in communications do not seek to obtain training, certification, and education (either through the center or through an academic institution), the public and other public safety entities will not readily recognize their importance and contributions. Individuals and center leadership must be willing to invest in the personnel to perpetuate a level of professionalism and recognition commensurate with the other public safety disciplines. Individuals must be willing to make a personal investment in themselves professionally via continuing education, secondary education, management training, and the like.

Achieving national training standards or educating the public and public safety partners is not an easy task. Grass root efforts are needed; we must recognize ourselves as professionals and promote the profession. It is a career choice and not just a job. Public safety communications professionals should not be afraid to contact their local, state, and federal legislators advocating their career. If not you, then who?

TRAINING

A profession can be defined as an endeavor that requires continuing education/training in order to maintain a required level of skill and proficiency. The PSCC is unique to many job environments, requiring a consistent level of performance while maintaining a constant environment of change driven greatly by technology, but also by the expectations from an ever changing environment caused by the needs of the public and the needs of the field responder.

9-1-1 Public Safety communications training have and continue to be developed by APCO and other organizations. APCO is the only public safety communications association accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to develop true standard and APCO pursues and assumes that responsibility very seriously. Identifying three (3) primary target areas for standards development, i.e. training, operations, and technology, APCO has set out to provide a comprehensive suite of standards for use throughout the industry.⁸

Public Safety Training standards help facilitate the training of 9-1-1 and Law Enforcement, Fire-Rescue, and EMS dispatchers and other supporting staff, assisting PSCCs through the establishment of baseline criteria for training, and provide baselines for expectations in the PSCC and the individual(s) who every day support the public's request for help and the response of the public safety team.

The Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators (PST), formerly Project 33 or P33, provides a comprehensive outline for training programs and curriculum. APCO's (Public Safety Communications) Call Center Standards Committee has worked diligently in the research and composition of this standard stating; "The focus of this standard is to provide the training necessary for front-line public safety communications personnel to be competent in the delivery of

APCO PROJECT 33 TRAINING PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS As of August 2011, include:	
Arkansas	1
Colorado	3
Delaware	1
Florida	2
Idaho	1
Iowa	1
Illinois	1
North Carolina	2
Nebraska	1
Ohio	2
Pennsylvania	2
Virginia	2
Washington	2

⁸ APCO Standards, www.apcostandards.org.

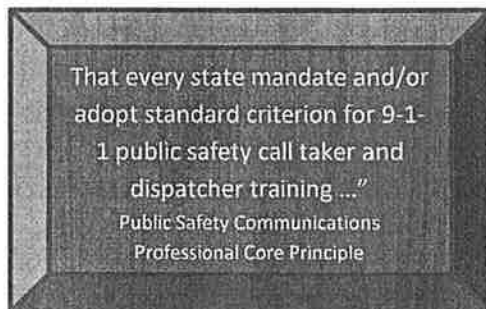
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service the public deserves and expects".⁹ The following have completed the requirements and are P33 certified:

- ✓ Ada County 911 Center (ID)
- ✓ Brevard County Sheriff's Office – Communications Center (FL)
- ✓ City of Cedar Rapids Joint Communications Agency (IA)
- ✓ Cincinnati Police Communications Section (OH)
- ✓ Charlottesville - UVA - Albemarle County Emergency Communications Center (VA)
- ✓ Delaware State Police Communications Section (DE)
- ✓ Denver 9-1-1 Communications Center (CO)
- ✓ Durham Emergency Communications Center (NC)
- ✓ El Paso County Sheriff's Office (CO)
- ✓ Fayetteville Police Department (AR)
- ✓ Hamilton County Department of Communications (OH)
- ✓ Lancaster County-Wide Communications (PA)
- ✓ Lincoln Emergency Communications (NE)
- ✓ Naperville Public Safety Answering Point (IL)
- ✓ North East King County Regional Public Safety Communication Agency (NORCOM) (WA)
- ✓ Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (FL)
- ✓ Raleigh-Wake Emergency Communications (NC)
- ✓ Stafford County Sheriff's Office Emergency Communications (VA)
- ✓ Summit County Communications Center (CO)
- ✓ York County 9-1-1 (PA)
- ✓ Valley Communications (WA)

You may ask, "How does APCO ensure compliance to these Minimum Standards?" The APCO Project 33 Training Certification Program provides the opportunity for agencies to submit their training curricula for certification. To be certified, an agency must demonstrate how their training program meets and/or exceeds the requirements within the PST standard. Of the above agencies, 17 had their training programs recognized as having achieved certified compliance in meeting or exceeding the APCO Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators (2006). In 2011, four additional agencies received certification under the newly released Telecommunicator – 2010 program, and one of the initial agencies will be seeking recertification this year. In order to maintain this certification, agency training program recertification is required every three years.



Although the number reflected may seem small in comparison to the number of individual agencies and/or training programs, it is through the efforts of ProCHRT that an awareness of this essential tool can be utilized to ensure a standard and comprehensive training program. Through the support of local, state and federal officials, these minimum training standards can be seen as an opportunity to ensure an up-to-date and current training opportunity for every public safety telecommunicator in the country, to ensure these individuals receive all of the tools

necessary to perform their very difficult and stressful task for, as we all know, those who are trained in the truest sense of the word will deliver a better product. This equates to individuals performing to the highest level across the country on a consistent basis and at a level expected by every citizen in this country.

⁹ APCO ANS 3.103.1-2010: Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators.

ADOPTION OF STANDARDS

To date, there are no nationally mandated training standards. Some states and/or agencies have adopted minimum training standards for public safety communications professionals, but these achievements should be viewed as the beginning rather than the end of the journey. At the very least, states and agencies should make use of the free standards available, which can be incorporated into their standard operating procedures or guidelines (SOP/SOG). Some of these standards include:¹⁰

- APCO ANS 3.103.1-2010: Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators
- APCO ANS 1.101.2-2010: Standard for Public Safety Telecommunicators when Responding to Calls Pertaining to Missing, Abducted and Sexually Exploited Children
- APCO/NENA ANS 1.102.2-2010: PSAP-Service Capability Criteria Rating Scale
- APCO/NPSTC ANS 1.104.1-2010: Standard Channel Nomenclature for the Public Safety Interoperability Channels
- APCO/NENA ANS 1.105.1-2009: Standard for Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce (TERT) Deployment
- APCO ANS 1.106.1-2009: Core Competencies for Public Safety Communications Manager/Director
- APCO/CSAA 2.101.1-2008: Alarm Monitoring Company to Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) Computer-aided Dispatch (CAD) External Alarm Interface Exchange
- APCO ANS 3.101.1-2007: Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Communications Training Officer



"That training, operational and technical standards are utilized and that the public safety communications standards continue to be developed in support of the profession."
Public Safety Communications Professional Core Principle

CERTIFICATIONS

What certifications are available to your center and unique to this profession? Below are a few of the most common certifications in public safety communications. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but is considered informative in nature.

- *The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc., (CALEA), Public Safety Communications Accreditation*

The CALEA Public Safety Communications Accreditation Program provides a communications center, or the communications unit of a public safety agency, with a process to systemically review and internally assess its operations and procedures. Since the first CALEA Communication Accreditation Award was granted in 1999, the program has become the primary method for a communications agency to voluntarily demonstrate its commitment to excellence. The standards upon which the Public Safety Communications Accreditation Program is based reflect the current thinking and experience of public safety communications executives and accreditation experts.

¹⁰ These standards are available for free download at www.apcostandards.org.

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APCO International (Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International, Inc.), the leading communications membership association, was a partner in the development of CALEA's *Standards for Public Safety Communications Agencies*® and its Accreditation Program. This relationship continues today as APCO recognizes the achievements of CALEA Accredited Public Safety Communications agencies and supports accreditation.¹¹

- *Registered Public-Safety Leader (RPL)*

The APCO Institute Leadership Certificate Program is a comprehensive 12 month online program leading to the professional designation of Registered Public-Safety Leader (RPL). RPL recipients receive a certificate of acceptance into the APCO Institute Registry of Public-Safety Leaders, a formal and prestigious acknowledgment of excellence within our industry.

Whether you are the leader of a work team in your agency, a volunteer task force or committee, or an entire organization, there are certain things you need to know and skills you need to develop to be successful. If you are willing to work at developing your leadership potential, this program will prepare you for the challenges and opportunities of leadership.¹²

- *APCO Project Training Program Certification (P33 Certified)*

The APCO P33 Training Program Certification - Telecommunicator 2010 requires agencies to meet or exceed the APCO ANS 3.103.1-2010: Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators. The standard specifies the minimum training requirements of call takers and dispatchers of law enforcement, fire services, and emergency medical services assigned to the public safety telecommunicator function. Telecommunicators are typically tasked with receiving, processing, transmitting, and conveying public safety information to dispatchers, law enforcement officers, fire fighters, emergency medical and emergency management personnel. Public Safety Telecommunicator Training Programs applying for certification focus on both new and veteran public safety telecommunicators' needs.¹³

- *Emergency Number Professional (ENP)*

Certification is a tool of a professional association to establish the benchmarks of performance that will signify a broad-based competence in the professional field. By successfully completing this certification program, you will:

- Demonstrate a mastery of the comprehensive knowledge base required for emergency number program management.
- Help to raise industry standards and increase the respect and prestige of those involved in 9-1-1.

¹¹ Cited from www.calea.org. Please visit this site for more information.

¹² Cited from http://www.apcointl.org/institute/RPL_program.htm. Please visit this site for more information.

¹³ Cited from www.apcointl.org/P33. Please visit this site for more information.

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- Confirm your commitment to the 9-1-1 profession by showing yourself to be a leader in public safety and pledging yourself to stay aware of current issues and developments in the field.¹⁴

- *National Incident Management System (NIMS)*

A critical tool in promoting the nationwide implementation of NIMS is a well-developed training program that facilitates NIMS training throughout the Nation, growing the number of adequately trained and qualified emergency management/response personnel. Closely related to the training, core competencies will form the basis of the training courses' learning objectives and personnel qualifications that validate proficiency.¹⁵ The National Integration Center (NIC) is charged with the development of NIMS core competencies, training courses, and personnel qualifications.¹⁶

- *National Crime Information Center (NCIC)*

The purpose for maintaining the NCIC system is to provide a computerized database for ready access by a criminal justice agency making an inquiry and for prompt disclosure of information in the system from other criminal justice agencies about crimes and criminals. This information assists authorized agencies in criminal justice and related law enforcement objectives, such as apprehending fugitives, locating missing persons, locating and returning stolen property, as well as in the protection of the law enforcement officers encountering the individuals described in the system.¹⁷

NCIC policy establishes a number of security measures to ensure the privacy and integrity of the data. The information passing through the network is encrypted to prevent unauthorized access. Each user of the system is authenticated to ensure proper levels of access for every transaction. To further ascertain and verify the accuracy and integrity of the data, each agency must periodically validate its records. Agencies also must undergo periodic audits to ensure data quality and adherence to all security provisions.¹⁸

¹⁴ Cited from <http://www.nena.org/enp>. Please visit this site for more information.

¹⁵ Cited from <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/NIMSTrainingCourses.shtm>. Please visit this site for more information.

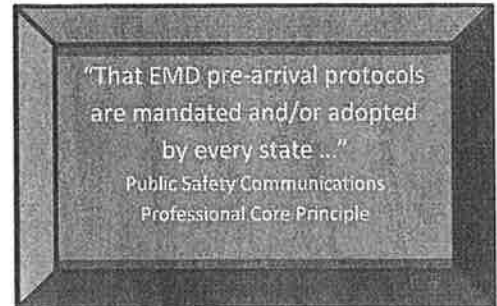
¹⁶ Cited from <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/>. Please visit this site for more information.

¹⁷ Cited from <http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/doj/fbi/is/ncic.htm>. Please visit this site for more information.

¹⁸ Cited from <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ncic>. Please visit this site for more information.

- *Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD)*

This is a certification/training a public safety communications professional can obtain through APCO or other entities. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) developed a set of protocols in the late 1970s as part of a program to improve survivability of vehicle crash victims on the nation's highways.¹⁹ The protocols have been expanded to provide pre-arrival assistance to persons in emergencies until units arrive on scene.



Many states do not require EMD, but many communication centers across the country have voluntarily adopted this process into their policies.

The hiring process in the PSCC is solely up to the authority having jurisdiction. The public does expect that individuals working in the PSCC will have the same high moral and ethical values as fire, EMS & law enforcement professionals. Ideally, these qualities, sought in any professional, would be subjected to a background search, psychological & personality testing as well as polygraph and skills testing. However, all of this is not often achieved in positions where pay is not competitive and the schedule is variable. The other mitigating factors are resources (funding for all of the testing) and the need to fill a seat.

A career in public safety communications is dynamic, requires a lifetime of training and continuous honing of knowledge, skills and abilities.

Public safety communications must be funded in an equal manner to the service discipline as all of public safety must be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year, including holidays.

DID YOU KNOW?

RESEARCH

The members of ProCHRT, in conjunction with the Executive Council Representatives, Member & Chapter Services Committee, and several dedicated public safety communications professionals, conducted a national survey to gather information regarding public safety communications training standards in each state, labor laws, retirement, and if public safety communications personnel are classified as Public Safety and/or First Responder. A compilation of this information is contained in the Appendix of this document.

Efforts throughout the country to make end-roads into much of the outcomes and recommendations of this report have occurred. Locally and by state, individuals and APCO Chapters have worked to improve employment conditions for the public safety communications professional. The following will provide a glimpse into some of those efforts.

¹⁹ Cited from <http://www.911dispatch.com/info/emd/index.html>.

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Montana²⁰

Efforts in Montana have focused on increasing awareness of the profession and the lack of equity when compared to other public safety professionals have proven positive and negative. Admittedly, officials recognize the profession is a "hard job."

Getting organizations and factions similar and involved in Public Safety is vital to the work being done, but the awareness of what we do and the equity of our profession compared to others has been paramount to the Montana effort. Through a concerted and coordinated effort, awareness of the profession had definitely grown in Montana. This success can be seen through the support from the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association, in addition to support from unions, firefighters, ems, the Montana Association of Chiefs of Police, the Montana Police Protective Association, and Montana Highway Patrol, just to name a few, should be acknowledged and should serve as an inclusion by the rest of the public safety community in Montana.

A bill presented in 2011 to the Montana Legislature was an effort to provide equity in retirement benefits on par with other public safety professionals. Although most were supportive, party lines dictated the success of the bill. Understanding current economic conditions and the timing of the bill, decision makers, although in agreement with its intent, were remiss in committing monies from their constituents to fund this effort which would benefit mostly new hires as not all dispatchers statewide would choose to move to the 20 year retirement. We've done the homework with training costs and turnover, but it's been a hard sell. Bottom line for legislatures is more money being taken from the county and city coffers. It has been identified that more education must occur and efforts will continue in Montana.

Florida²¹

The 'road to telecommunicator legislation' in Florida began in 1996 with the adoption of a 232 hour telecommunicator training curriculum supported through the Florida Department of Education. Simultaneously, the research began in an effort to reclassify telecommunicators to a special retirement classification.

A Task Force, established in 2001, was established to conduct a review of retirement and certification training needs for Florida telecommunicators which continues today as the "Standards and Certification" standing committee of the Florida APCO Chapter. In its efforts to find a home within Florida's state government, many state agencies, disappointingly, were not interested in providing oversight for a Telecommunicator certification program. Fortunately, through continued efforts, in the fall of 2007, draft legislation for Training and Mandatory State Certification" was written and subsequently prepared for the 2008 Florida legislative session. In 2008, voluntary certification legislation passed. In 2009, legislation was passed mandating 232 hours of training, and certification by the Department of Health for all FL telecommunicators, by Oct 1, 2012.

During the legislative session in 2007, a retirement bill was introduced to address retirement benefits of concern, legislators questioned why we should receive special retirement benefits when we had no minimum training requirements and were not "certified" like law enforcement, fire, and EMS personnel. Since training and mandatory state certification is now a reality in Florida, efforts will continue with the retirement initiative, albeit it

²⁰ Information provided by Montana Chapter and ProCHRT members Kimberly Burdick and Susan Bomstad.

²¹ Information provided by Florida Chapter and ProCHRT member Debbie Gailbreath.

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is seen as an uphill challenge as retirement benefits for other public safety partners have seen significant changes in hard economic times.

West Virginia²²

In March, 2011, the West Virginia legislature amended §24-6-5 relating to requirements for enhanced emergency telephone systems and county emergency dispatch centers. The code section now, in its entirety, requires “persons employed to dispatch emergency calls” successfully complete:

1. A forty-hour nationally recognized training course for dispatchers within one year of the date of their employment; and
2. An additional nationally recognized emergency medical dispatch course approved by the Office of Emergency Medical Services.

It also places ownership on the agency have jurisdiction to insure the development of policies and procedures in establishing protocols for emergency medical calls through the use of EMD.

Efforts such as these recognize the need for such critical services and without statewide mandates would not be realized on a statewide, comprehensive scale that provides the same level of service to all.

Arkansas²³

Legislation, passed with no opposition, making Telecommunicator Training available statewide was signed into law by Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe on March 23, 2011. This provides centralized responsibility and repository for the facilitation of training, but falls short of making it mandatory, will be based on APCO’s Minimum Training Standards for Telecommunicators (APCO ANS 3.103.1-2010).

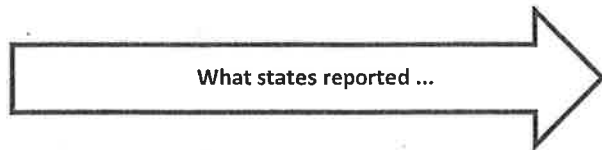
This legislation became state law in six weeks, but the process began two years ago. The typical questions arose, “what level of training?” and “who will pay for it?” As is felt across the country, creative thinking has and will continue to facilitate positive changes to our industry. In Arkansas, a percent of the 9-1-1 fees collected from wireless phone bills was reallocated; however, not without a separate appropriations bill to direct the funding. Although initially drafted to mandate training, it was clear that a mandate would kill the bill and its support. “We did have to make compromises,” says McQuin. “With the committee, we were able to discuss issues they had and we had. We actually came out with a very good bill that meets everyone’s needs.” The hope is that, as the curriculum is established and the value of the training is realized, minimum training and certification will become mandatory.

²² Information obtained from West Virginia Legislature, House Bill 2013, <http://www.legis.state.wv.us>.

²³ Information obtained from Public Safety Communications publication, March 24, 2011, <http://psc.apcointl.org/2011/03/24/legislation-makes-telecommunicator-training-available-in-arkansas>.

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51%

Required training?

- 51% of states have legislation requiring training for public safety telecommunicators. (51 states and Washington DC were included in the survey)

32

Average number of training hours?

- The average number of hours of training required of the states that require certification is 66. If you include the States that do have not requirement this number drops to 32.
- Two states that require certification but provide no number of hours are not included in these averages.
- ibid

48%

No Emergency Medical Dispatch requirements?

- 24 states (48%) have no EMD requirements
- 18 states (36%) have mandatory EMD requirements
- 8 (16%) have voluntary EMD requirements

PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION

A career in public safety communications is dynamic, requires a lifetime of training and continuous grooming of knowledge, skills and abilities. The Virginia Chapter of APCO Taskforce, a group of public safety communications professionals, began an initiative to take a closer look at the issue of why communications staff should be considered part of the public safety community and what specifically makes this career essential as opposed to clerical positions (current FLSA designation).

When making the bold statement that public safety communications is indeed a full and equal partner of the public safety community, substantiation is needed to authenticate this claim. The very nature of this profession *is* the foundation for this claim.

There is a synergy and interdependence between communications and fire, EMS, and law enforcement. Each of the service disciplines²⁴ work closely with communications for the receipt and dispatch of calls, response information and responder safety.

The public safety communications personnel are the clearing house for information, providing critical information and updates to other first responders and are indeed the conduit of the public to public safety. Without communications, there is no one to answer the call; without the service disciplines, there is no one to respond

²⁴ Service disciplines include law enforcement, fire, and EMS.

All of public safety, communications included, must handle public expectations on a daily basis. When an individual dials 9-1-1 in an emergency, there is an expectation of "I called the cops & they were there!" There is not a public understanding of the distinction between communications and the service disciplines. Public safety communications must be funded in an equal manner to the service discipline as all of public safety must be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year, including holidays.



Public safety communications professionals are truly First Responders. Many communications centers across the nation provide pre-arrival instructions, even if state legislation does not mandate EMD. Many states, such as Rhode Island, provide pre-arrival instructions provided by the Red Cross. These instructions save lives by assisting the caller in administering CPR, deliver babies, give instructions on first aid, and much more.

Communications personnel help gather information about the medical condition of patients and the safety of the scene (domestic, robbery and other violent crime scenes) to share with the responding units.

Florida: A State Snapshot

Required Training Hours

*1,344 for Paramedic
1,200 for Hairstylist
760 hours for L.E. officer
532 for Corrections officer
360 for Firefighter
288 for EMT*

***240 for 9-1-1 operators
effective July 1, 2010***

The voice of a public safety Telecommunicator is what a caller in an emergency hears first – when the airlines were hijacked during 9/11, when the natural disaster of Hurricane Katrina hit or when an individual experiences an emergency – public safety communications is the first to respond. They are the unseen hero providing the critical link to interoperability of communication and response.

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How much of duties/responsibilities are spent interacting, directly supporting response and/or coordinating with other public safety disciplines? Answering this question truly brings to light the understanding of how the individuals fulfilling these duties are essential personnel rather than clerical. Let's take a look at the differences...

Essential Personnel

Position must be filled 24/7/365 (holidays, too)

Shift lengths vary from 8 -24 hours

Incumbent is susceptible to chronic, excessive and prolonged stress

Position must always be covered – either through relief staff or overtime

Must be 100% accurate 100% of the time – results could be devastating

Must meet demand real time

More help means overtime

Overtime is a way of life to ensure the continuity of operations

Rapid multi-processing

Knowledge, skills and abilities must evolve with technology and standards to ensure call accuracy and timely emergency responses

Always expect the unexpected – the types of calls vary from hour-to-hour and day-to-day

Training is extensive and ongoing – can often require two years to be fully trained

Turnover impacts operation. Inappropriate staffing levels force overtime and have an inverse relationship with retention. Turnover rate for public safety communications is 19%²⁵

Shift lengths vary from 8 -24 hours

Clerical Personnel

Works Monday- Friday

Mostly 8-10 hour shifts

Little/no Stress, does not experience Chronic Stress

No relief factor – the job task can wait until the individual returns

Make a mistake? No life is on the line

Work can be done at the incumbent's leisure/timeline

Need help? Call a temp

Overtime is not often required and not linked to sustainability of operations

Single or multi-tasking

Knowledge, skills and abilities should evolve to ensure the incumbent remains relevant in the work force, but they are not tied to the preservation of life

Work type is reliable

Training is less technical in nature and not as lengthy

Turnover is contingent upon industry, but is not mission-critical

Mostly 8-10 hour shifts

²⁵ APCO Project RETAINS Next Generation Study released in 2009 found the national turnover rate to be 19%, up from 17% in 2005. Research has shown the turnover rate for nurses is down from 15% (2005) to 8% (2009).

THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES OF PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS

Brainstorm if you like a difficult job. A job that requires you to not just “multi-task” but takes the job to a whole unique level. A job which requires an individual to perform multiple job functions concurrently. This would be the job of the modern public safety communications professional. At any given time, many of these professionals are 1) on the phone calming a frantic caller, 2) monitoring a radio when, at any given time, a responder yells unexpectedly for help or marks in pursuit, 3) the call information changes and now requires the delivery of EMD, 4) the entry of information into the CAD to facilitate the response *and* to keep responders current on information available for the call response, and 5) continue to monitor other calls and activities within the PSCC that could affect the call. Yes, there is one individual who is trained and expected to deliver successfully on every call – the public safety communications professional. Specific to **this** profession, these individuals perform a unique set of skills and abilities known as rapid multi-processing.

A recent review of the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed and required of the public safety communications professional include:

- Ability to remain calm under the most extreme circumstances and life-changing events;
- Ability to process information with an expectation of 100% accuracy 100% of the time;
- The skill set to remain calm while interrogating callers who have just experienced the worse event in their life;
- The skill to adapt instantaneously to changes in the call event;
- The knowledge to readily apply agency protocols from across different public safety disciplines;
- The knowledge of many months of training, both in the classroom and on-the-job;
- The skills and abilities to perform multiple job functions simultaneously;
- Ability to work in an environment that requires “rapid multi-processing.” Rapid Multi-Processing has been defined a process unique to the public safety communications professional which requires, in order to complete job functions, the use of an enhanced level of knowledge, skills and abilities in the work place to efficiently utilize multiple technology platforms and applications concurrently. It extends to the public safety communications professional’s ability to gather and relay critical information under a set of specific guidelines in which priorities change constantly and in which multiple incidents are managed simultaneously, all in a fluid manner while utilizing critical thinking skills.²⁶
- The knowledge of geography, resource accessibility, and agency specific systems.

Further to this point, APCO ANS 3.103.1-2010 Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators identifies the following as the general knowledge and skills of a Telecommunicator:

4.2 General Knowledge of the Telecommunicator

The following general areas of knowledge have been identified for the Telecommunicator regardless of their area of public safety expertise. The Agency shall require the Telecommunicator to demonstrate proficiency in at least the following areas:

- 4.2.1 Comprehension of jurisdictional boundaries and geography,
- 4.2.2 Proper application of Agency terminology,
- 4.2.3 An awareness of and respect for diverse populations within the Agency’s service area,

²⁶ Rapid Multi-Processing is a higher-level unique skill set specific to public safety communications and defined by APCO International.

- 4.2.4 The ability to identify and properly utilize Agency resources, and
- 4.2.5 Comprehension of their role in:
 - 4.2.5.1 Incident Command Systems (ICS),
 - 4.2.5.2 National Incident Management Systems (NIMS), including, but not limited to required training, Tactical Interoperable Communication Plan (TICP), and
 - 4.2.5.3 State or local emergency operations plans.

4.3 General Skills of the Telecommunicator

High-performing incumbent Telecommunicators have been identified as demonstrating the ability to:

- 4.3.1 Rapid Multi-Processing along with Multi-tasking,
- 4.3.2 Critical thinking,
- 4.3.3 Provide effective customer service,
- 4.3.5 Make quick workable decisions,
- 4.3.6 Solve problems,
- 4.3.7 Work effectively with others, and
- 4.3.8 Accurately communicate effectively both verbally and in writing.
- 4.3.9 The Telecommunicator shall demonstrate the application of effective interpersonal communication skills, which includes:
 - 4.3.9.1 Active listening,
 - 4.3.9.2 Clear enunciation,
 - 4.3.9.3 The ability to be concise in verbal and written communications,
 - 4.3.9.4 Appropriate use of Agency terminology, codes, and signals,
 - 4.3.9.5 An understanding of plain speech/language techniques,
 - 4.3.9.6 The use of the Agency approved phonetic alphabet,
 - 4.3.9.7 The use of generally accepted customer service skills, and
 - 4.3.9.8 The ability to communicate on a professional level with internal and external customers.²⁷

When looking at the required knowledge, skills and abilities of a public safety communications professional, there is a comparison to the nature of work done by air traffic and terminal radar controllers. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the nature of work of air traffic controllers is:

The National Airspace System (NAS) is a vast network of people and equipment that ensures the safe operation of commercial and private aircraft. *Air traffic controllers* work within the NAS to coordinate the movement of air traffic to make certain that planes stay a safe distance apart. Their immediate concern is safety, but controllers also must direct planes efficiently to minimize delays. Some regulate airport traffic through designated airspaces; others regulate airport arrivals and departures.

Terminal controllers watch over all planes traveling in an airport's airspace. Their main responsibility is to organize the flow of aircraft into and out of the airport. They work in either the control tower or the terminal radar approach control (TRACON) room or building. Relying on visual observation, the *tower local controllers* sequence arrival aircraft for landing and issue departure clearances for those departing from the airport. Other controllers in the tower control the movement of aircraft on the taxiways, handle flight data, and provide flight plan clearances.

²⁷ Cited from APCO ANS 3.103.1-2010 Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators. Can be downloaded from www.apcostandards.org.

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Terminal radar controllers manage aircraft departing from or arriving to an airport by monitoring each aircraft's movement on radar to ensure that a safe distance is maintained between all aircraft under their control. In addition, terminal controllers keep pilots informed about weather and runway conditions.²⁸

Not unlike public safety communications professional, air traffic controllers work in a high-stress environment requiring a high-level of accuracy. The working conditions of this position are very similar to a communications center from the "semi-dark" working conditions, never seeing the unit/individuals being assisted to the need for training to use required technology. Air traffic controllers and terminal radar controllers

During busy times, controllers must work rapidly and efficiently. Total concentration is required to keep track of several planes at the same time and to make certain that all pilots receive correct instructions. The mental stress of being responsible for the safety of several aircraft and their passengers can be exhausting. Unlike tower controllers, radar controllers also have the extra stress of having to work in semi-darkness, never seeing the actual aircraft they control except as a small "blip" on the radarscope. Controllers who work in flight service stations work in offices close to the communications and computer equipment.²⁹

Despite the similarities in the nature, schedule, and technological requirements of the work, there is a world of difference in the pay, hiring criteria, training requirements, and recognition between these two professions. An air traffic/terminal radar controller must fulfill the following

There are three main pathways to become an air traffic controller with the FAA. The first is air traffic controllers with prior experience through either the FAA or the Department of Defense as a civilian or veteran. Second are applicants from the general public. These applicants must have 3 years of progressively responsible full-time work experience, have completed a full 4 years of college, or a combination of both. In combining education and experience, 1 year of undergraduate study—30 semester or 45 quarter hours—is equivalent to 9 months of work experience. The third way is for an applicant to have successfully completed an aviation-related program of study through the FAA's Air Traffic-Collegiate Training Initiative (AT-CTI) program. In 2008, there were 31 schools in the AT-CTI program.³⁰

Additionally, those who are hired on will receive 12 weeks of academy training plus additional on-the-job training. There is no standardization of training across the nation for public safety communications centers. (*See Information by State in the appendix for a breakdown of training requirements by states*). In many centers, there is no academy training and training can be done on-the-job. Yet, public safety communications professionals are tasked with officer safety, assisting a caller in crisis to administer CPR, deliver a baby, or provide emotional support during a domestic violence incident.

Air traffic/terminal radar controllers must receive training to ensure the effective and efficient application of technology to keep the public safe. However, budgets for public safety communications often do not include funding for training and must be completed in-house.

²⁸ Cited from <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos108.htm#nature>. Please visit this site for more information.

²⁹ *ibid*

³⁰ *ibid*

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There is a severe pay discrepancy between these two professions. The Bureau of Labor Statistics provides the following wage information for Air traffic Controllers:

Air traffic controllers earn relatively high pay and have good benefits. Median annual wages of air traffic controllers in May 2008 were \$111,870. The middle 50 percent earned between \$71,050 and \$143,780. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$45,020, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$161,010. The average annual salary, excluding overtime earnings, for air traffic controllers in the Federal Government—which employs 90 percent of all controllers—was \$109,218 in March 2009.³¹

In the 2005 APCO Project RETAINS Effective Practices Guide, research found that “hourly base pay rate was the third most important predictor of center retention rate. There was a positive relationship between base pay and center retention rate...”³² Throughout study I and study II, sample information was gathered comparing hourly base pay and a salary comparison study of metro area public safety communications centers.³³ These two tables show the distinct disparity of pay between the two professions despite the similarity of working conditions, nature of the job, schedule and technological requirements.

Table 11: Hourly base pay rates								
	Study I (Average size = 18)				Study II (Average size = 135)			
Position	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.
Calltaker	\$12.71	\$12.20	\$6.36	\$31.00	\$14.27	\$14.82	\$10.02	\$17.57
Dispatcher	\$12.61	\$12.10	\$6.36	\$21.14	\$15.91	\$15.80	\$10.20	\$20.34
Calltaker/Dispatcher	\$13.04	\$12.40	\$6.36	\$30.00	\$14.62	\$14.76	\$10.20	\$18.26
Shift supervisor	\$16.79	\$15.65	\$9.17	\$40.00	\$22.25	\$21.45	\$16.58	\$34.68

Source: APCO Project RETAINS Effective Practices Guide, August 2005

³¹ Cited from <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos108.htm#nature>. Please visit this site for more information.

³² APCO Project RETAINS Effective Practices Guide, August 2005.

³³ This information is intended to represent a random sample of wages across the nation, but are not to be used as benchmarks to establishing pay grades.

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Table 12: Salary Comparison Study for Metro Area - Public Safety Communications Centers

CENTER*	Calltaker		Dispatcher		Lead Dispatcher		Supervisor		Director/Manager	
	ENTRY	TOP	ENTRY	TOP	ENTRY	TOP	ENTRY	TOP	ENTRY	TOP
Center A	n/a	n/a	\$13.91	\$21.73	\$16.91	\$22.81	n/a	n/a	(3) \$41,366	\$62,049
Center B	n/a	n/a	\$14.86	\$18.32	\$15.60	\$19.23	\$17.51	\$25.75	(3) \$46,883	\$68,973
Center C	n/a	n/a	\$15.20	\$22.51	\$15.97	\$23.65	\$18.53	\$27.43	(4) \$60,098	\$88,895
Center D	n/a	n/a	\$15.48	\$21.50	\$17.95	\$24.11	\$20.11	\$33.52	(1) \$68,189	\$113,649
Center E	n/a	n/a	\$15.58	\$23.08	n/a	n/a	\$18.75	\$27.69	(4) \$58,200	\$84,600
Center F	n/a	n/a	\$15.76	\$22.04	\$18.96	\$26.55	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Center G	\$13.50	\$21.66	\$15.80	\$25.35	n/a	n/a	\$21.58	\$33.37	(3) \$57,036	\$91,392
Center H	\$12.46	\$18.69	\$16.15	\$24.23	\$21.23	\$31.85	\$21.77	\$32.57	(4) \$57,600	\$86,400
Center I	n/a	n/a	\$16.35	\$24.53	n/a	n/a	\$20.53	\$30.80	(3) \$60,200	\$93,310
Center J	n/a	n/a	\$17.24	\$30.75	n/a	n/a	\$26.64	\$34.76	(2) \$64,610	\$84,302
Average	\$12.98	\$20.18	\$15.63	\$23.40	\$17.77	\$24.70	\$20.68	\$30.74	\$57,131	\$85,952

Source: APCO Project RETAINS Effective Practices Guide, August 2005

Needless to say, it is difficult to retain good and competent employees if they are not paid commensurate with their skills or job responsibilities and do not receive the training or tools needed to be effective in their positions.

THE PERSON IN THE CHAIR

UNDERSTANDING IMPLICATIONS OF STRESS

To successfully mitigate and manage stress, there must be an overall understanding of what stress is, as well as how to recognize and reduce stress. The constant pressures and physical constraints of the Public Safety Communications profession create a uniquely stressful profession. Few other careers share the same types of constraints as telecommunications, constraints such as work in site-specific positions, with operators unable to see firsthand what the true situation is and unable to physically have impact on the outcome of the situation, yet still expected to confidently handle operations. Day-to-day operations in communications centers must continue despite the stress hazard and health related impacts.³⁴

When trying to understanding the implications of stress, the best information came from the professionals working in these roles. Below are stories shared from around the country highlighting and illustrating the hidden and silent dangers associated with this profession.

There are many articles and news reports that provide sufficient support and information regarding the number of hours an individual works in a day and how it can affect the individual's cardiac health. "It got me thinking about watching my folks at the end of a very hard day going home exhausted," said Carol Adams, Director of the Stafford County Emergency Communications Center. "Although dispatchers are not chasing criminals or carrying heavy fire hoses, I've seen them exhausted at the conclusion of their shift. Even though not a "physically" demanding job, it

³⁴ Cited from the APCO Institute "Surviving Stress: Recognition, Reduction and Management" First Edition.

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is an extremely mentally demanding job which takes its 'physical' toll on a dispatcher every day." Exhaustion is derived when combining the 'mental' and when exposed to chronic stress."

The impact of chronic stress and impact on the health and mental well-being of these individuals may never been realized. The public safety communications profession is predominantly a young workforce, evident by the lack of service years, turn turnover rates, and the lack of individuals working in the profession to retirement.

"Too Many Hours at Work Might Harm the Heart ... Study of British workers found 11-hour days raised heart disease risk 67%"
Bloomberg Businessweek, April 4, 2011

Chronic stress can lead to fatigue, PMS, anxiety, depression, obesity, and immune dysfunction. If an individual continues to live under chronic stress, eventually you will burn out and feel exhausted all of the time even when you finally get some rest.

Individuals entering the workforce quickly recognize the impact of this profession on their mental, physical and long-term job outlook. Many enter the profession, utilizing its connection to public safety as a stepping stone to other jobs that 1) they may not be old enough to do, 2) lack the education or related to experience to complete their resumes, or 3) looking for a foot in the door to become a law enforcement officer, firefighter, or paramedic.

The majority of individuals functioning on the frontlines of public safety communications are women. A U.S. government-funded study found that female workers with stressful jobs were more likely than women with less job strain to suffer a heart attack or a stroke or have clogged arteries."³⁵ The study was identified as "the longest major one to look at stress in women who make up nearly half of the U.S. workforce."³⁶

The study, involving 17,415 participants in the Women's Health Study, led by Dr. Michelle Albert, a cardiologist at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston concluded that, "the high-stress group had a 40% greater overall risk of heart problems, including heart attacks, strokes or clogged arteries needing bypass surgery or an artery-opening angioplasty procedure."³⁷ This study should raise great concern for the public safety communications professional, of which the majority of the workforce are made up of women, who are exposed to a continuous and chronic stressful work environment.

Public Safety Communications Professional from Oklahoma with 27 years of service shares....

We often hear justification from our brothers and sisters in the police and fire services that the reason they are part of high risk retirement systems is the fact that they put their lives on the line each and every day.

Upon turning 40 and going to my physician for my yearly checkup, he thought it would be best to go through the stress test process to ensure that there were no issues with my heart health. I was referred to a top cardiologist in Boca Raton, FL (who happened to have a NY Times best seller book on heart health out that week.) After successfully completing my testing regimen, my cardiologist and I had an in-depth consultation where we talked about heart health, stress, lifestyle and my profession.

Understanding the nature of my work, my doctor reiterated the importance for me to effectively deal with the stress in my life as it related to my work in the public safety communications field. He pointed out that stress "kills" people and that if I did nothing, it would kill me.

³⁵ Cited from "Stressful Jobs May Raise Women's Heart Attack Risk, Study Finds." For more information, please visit <http://healthfinder.gov/news/newsstory.aspx?docID=645931>

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

Understanding the nature of my work and the stress that is inherent to this industry I have come to the following conclusion: The stress I experience in my job can be as deadly as a bullet or the consequences of entering a burning building and having it collapse. If this is the case, then I am putting my life on the line each and every day as I walk into the public safety communications center.

Another Public Safety Communication Professional from California shares her story...

I wanted to share my story with you so others can hopefully learn from my experience without having to live through it. I attribute my health scare to not paying attention to my own health, but the habits formed as a dispatcher certainly didn't help. On December 2, 2009, I suffered a pulmonary embolism and nearly died; a large blood clot formed in my left leg, split in half, both parts passed through my heart then one half went into my left lung and the other went into my right lung.

The stress I experience in my job can be as deadly as a bullet or the consequences of entering a burning building and having it collapse. If this is the case, then I am putting my life on the line each and every day I walk into the public safety communications center.

I spent 3 days in ICU and 3 more days in the hospital, and it took nearly two months before I could return to work fulltime. As a result of the embolism I had a limp in my left leg. While I was being treated for the embolism they found I was pre-diabetic. I have spent the past year regaining my health and making a conscious effort to get up and move around the console, as that is one of the biggest factors the doctors consider to have been a contributing factor as to why I had a blood clot.

Unfortunately, in our profession it is very easy to get caught up in your work and stay glued to the console for hours at a time. I had other factors of course; I am overweight, didn't eat right, didn't get enough sleep and never drank enough water.

The lesson I learned from this experience is that you must make your health a priority, even if your job is one that requires you to be stationary for most of your shift. Get up once an hour and take a walk around the room, answer the phone while standing, do knee bends or anything you can think of to keep your blood moving freely. Make exercise a priority in your time off, drink plenty of water and get 7 hours of sleep a night.

TAKE CARE OF YOU

RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF STRESS...

In order to learn to handle your stress, you need to first recognize the signs and symptoms of stress. Public safety communications professionals handle stress on a daily basis, but do not readily recognize the impact of daily and cumulative stress has on their lives. What is cumulative stress? Cumulative stress is more the total of all the stressors impacting a person, taking into consideration the length of time that the person has been under stress, the number of critical incidents, and mid-range incidents that person has been exposed to.³⁸

³⁸ Cited from the APCO Institute "Surviving Stress: Recognition, Reduction and Management" First Edition.

There are other types of latent stressors to your body. Enjoy the night shift? Your body may not. Do a simple search on the internet on the effects of night shift work, and many sites and resources will tell you that working this type of schedule can lead to sleep and health problems. A recent study found nurses more likely to be at a high risk for breast cancer, cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disorders and reproductive problems. The World Health Organization (WHO) for Research on Cancer released a report in 2007 which classified shift workers in the second highest of its five-tier system that grades cancer risks in humans.

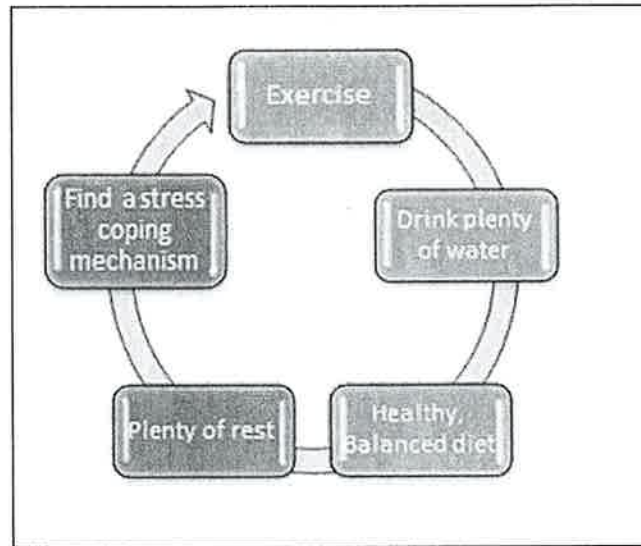
The stress on your body of not having a normal and/or regular sleep pattern can lead to a myriad of problems. However, individuals and communications center leadership can be predictors of success and healthy living through advocacy and education.

Physical Symptoms	Mental & Emotional Symptoms	Behavioral Symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headache• Menstrual disorders• Decreased libido• Back pain• Chest pain• Neck pain• Heart disease• High blood pressure• Heart palpitations• Heart burn• Nausea• Upset stomach• Decreased immunity• Weight problems due to overeating• Sleep problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling out of control• Forgetfulness• Feeling insecure• Lack of focus• Burning out more quickly• Depression• Sadness• Anxiety• Worrying• Irritability• Anger• Restlessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolate self from family• Lack of regard for responsibilities• Turn to drugs or alcohol• Take frustrations out on other people• Procrastination

Source: www.healthline.com/health/stress-at-work?

EXERCISE

Whether you join a gym, go for a walk on your lunch break or stand up/do knee-bends at the console, the point is to get moving. A danger of this profession is the sedentary nature of the work. Sitting for 8+ hours can have a dangerous impact on not only your waistline, but will affect your emotional and mental states. The Mayo Clinic staff released an article in 2010 on the benefits of exercise.³⁹



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Providing validation and supporting the professionals behind the scenes in Public Safety Communications is probably the best endeavor you can embark on. Studies have shown that lack of recognition is only one reason individuals do not stay in the profession. Many days of hearing the worse in people while supporting and keeping safe the nation's first responders taxes the emotional, physical, and mental well-being of individuals who time and time again make a significant difference in their community and this country.

The PSCC is uniquely different from most job environments, requiring a consistent level of performance while maintaining a constant environment of change driven greatly by technology, but also by the expectations from an ever changing environment caused by the needs of the public and the needs of the field responder. This is truly an environment where perfection is demanded and expected by the nature of the job.

These centers are "Mission Control" for their respective service area, an essential component in providing safe communities *and* a safe nation. Just as NASA's Mission Control heard those infamous words "Houston, we have a problem," PSCCs receive this same SOS thousands of times per day. Constant emergencies occur in every community and throughout this nation, answered and responded to by your local Mission Control comprised of dedicated and professional individuals.

In order to maintain a level of service to meet the nation's needs, resources and technology should be a priority. We must recognize the need for a renewed level of urgency, ensuring adequate funding, technical resources and

³⁹ <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/exercise/HQ01676>

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attention is paid to the nation's 9-1-1 infrastructure. In many ways, the "9-1-1 system has not kept pace with the nation's rapidly changing communication habits. As it ages, it is cracking, with problems like system overload, understaffing, misrouted calls, and bug-ridden databases leading to unanswered calls and dangerous errors."⁴⁰

The challenges which have plagued the PSCC professional and the industry for far too many years and continue, in many cases, to be unresolved placing the nation's 9-1-1 capabilities in jeopardy.

The recommendations contained herein are meant for any individual, agency, governing body, local, state, federal or tribunal governmental entity that has the duty to provide the utmost response to an emergency request. An emergency request begins with the individual feeling confident in a system that provides access to 9-1-1 through technology and a fully trained and experienced professional.

We, as a nation, need to make sure that public safety communications services delivered through 9-1-1 or other emergency numbers consistently comply with standards and meet expectations of a nation. As the taskforce continues its work, we will continue to provide recommendations based upon research, and current data to support the evolution of this profession.

We urge the public and decision makers at local, state and federal levels to take the appropriate measures to support and evolve the public safety communications profession and the individuals who serve in this capacity.

- ✓ Provide a work environment conducive to the mission critical function of public safety communications centers.
- ✓ Provide salaries and benefits commensurate with the critical nature of work performed.
- ✓ Recognize the necessary and ever-changing skills necessary and required of the public safety communications professional.
- ✓ Provide funding to the public safety communications efforts to ensure the best and most efficient delivery of services expected when 9-1-1 is called. This includes, but is not limited to, research and development and an improved infrastructure to accommodate today and tomorrow's technologies.
- ✓ Encourage local, state and federal leaders and officials to make staffing and training of the public safety communications professional a priority.
- ✓ Adopt national standards in support of public safety communications technical requirements, operations, training, and certification.
- ✓ Recognize the public safety communications profession as an equal partner in the public safety community.
- ✓ Recognize the public safety communications professional as part of the critical first responder community.
- ✓ Recognize the specific knowledge, skills and abilities unique to the profession, which distinguishes it from clerical positions as categorized within the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- ✓ The individual professional in this industry should be cognizant of the stressors and health risks associated with their job.
- ✓ The individual professional should take every opportunity to ensure they live healthy, active lives.

⁴⁰ 91A Study on the Health of the US 9-1-1 System, 9-1-1 Industry Alliance, 2008, http://www.911alliance.org/publications/download_report.cfm

APPENDIX

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INFORMATION BY STATE

The information provided below has been reported to ProCHRT by APCO members representing all 51 states and the District of Columbia. The information is meant to provide general fact-gathering information to identify if statewide training exists, whether improved retirement benefits comparable to our public safety partners in law enforcement and fire and rescue are AVAILABLE, and whether, in general, public safety telecommunicators are 'officially' considered as part of the *first responder* or public safety community by and in the identified state. The information is only accurate and complete to the extent the information was provided to ProCHRT.

The below list of information by state identifies specific training requirements of the state identified. It does not include training requirements of the US Department of Justice FBI in order for states and localities to facilitate NLETS and subsequently NCIC or subsequent training for in-state access to state information systems for motor vehicle, driver information with a connection to NLETS and NCIC.

ALABAMA

TRAINING STANDARDS

Other than NCIC requirements for terminal operators, and EMD requirements, there are no general public safety communicator training standards.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Most Public Safety Telecommunicators are employees of state or local government. All state employees and almost all local government employees are members of the Retirement Systems of Alabama. There are only a handful of local governments that are not RSA member agencies.

LABOR LAWS

A right to work state and abides by federal labor laws.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

ALASKA

TRAINING STANDARDS

No training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

State retirement provided.

LABOR LAWS

No information provided.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

ARIZONA

TRAINING STANDARDS

No training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Arizona Public Safety Telecommunicators are covered by a variety of retirement programs. Most fall under the State Retirement System (www.assrs.state.az.us). Some fall under the Corrections Office Retirement Program (www.psprs.com) and choose CORP). The City of Tucson has its own retirement program.

LABOR LAWS

Arizona Public Safety Telecommunicators are covered by a variety of retirement programs; however most fall under the State's retirement system. The remaining Telecommunicators are covered by their city-wide retirement program.

Labor laws can be found at www.azleg.state.az.us/ArizonaRevisedStatutes. Look for Title 23.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

As considered on an *individual governmental entity*, a few localities may consider these individuals as part of the public safety team. Statewide, none are classified to be "Public Safety" or "First Responders."

ARKANSAS

TRAINING STANDARDS

NEW! In 2011, legislation passed which identifies curriculum for training, albeit not mandated, it is applicable for statewide implementation.

P33 Certified: Fayetteville Police Department

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

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State and local retirement, for the most part provided (see <http://www.apers.org>). Some smaller agencies or municipalities may have their own 401k plan in supplement.

LABOR LAWS

Can be found at <http://www.arkansas.gov/labor>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

CALIFORNIA

TRAINING STANDARDS

Telecommunicators in the state of California must successfully complete the state mandated basic course (120 hours) within one (1) year of employment. Telecommunicators must pass 24 hours of state certified course work every two years after passing probation. All state certification and compliance is governed by the State Department of Justice - Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training. <http://www.td.dgs.ca.gov/Publications/911/911OpeaManual+.htm>

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

For information, visit <http://www.td.dgs.ca.gov/Publications/911/911OpeaManual+.htm>

LABOR LAWS

Most cities belong to the California Public Employees Retirement System; however, **each agency is different** (what does this mean?) For additional information visit <http://www.td.dgs.ca.gov/Publications/911/911OpeaManual+.htm>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS? Currently, California allows Telecommunicators to be considered "First Responders," but it is at the discretion of their employing agency. Most Telecommunicators are not considered part of the Public Safety team since "Safety" is in direct correlation to retirement benefits for non-public safety personnel.

COLORADO

TRAINING STANDARDS

No training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators.

P33 Certified: Summit County Communications Center

P33 Certified: Denver 9-1-1 Communications Center

P33 Certified: El Paso County Sheriff's Office

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

It was reported there are no benefits.

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit www.coworkforce.com/lab/

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Depending upon the agency, some could be considered first responders, support staff or administrative support.

CONNECTICUT

TRAINING STANDARDS

Telecommunicators must complete a State Approved Telecommunicator Program and Pass the State Telecommunicator examination. Two types of public safety telecommunicator instructor certificates are issued by the Office of State-Wide Emergency Telecommunications: Public Safety Telecommunicator Instructor Level I and Public Safety Telecommunicator Instructor Level II. The Public Safety Telecommunicator Instructor Level I certificate shall be valid for a period of one year. The Public Safety Telecommunicator Instructor Level II certificate shall be valid for a period of three years. Certified Level I or II Public Safety Telecommunicator Instructors shall apply to the Office of State-Wide Emergency Telecommunications of the Department of Public Safety for re-certification thirty (30) days prior to the expiration of their current certification term.

http://www.ct.gov/dps/lib/dps/office_of_statewide_emergency_telecommunications_files/oset-files/telecommunicator_training_regulations.pdf

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Telecommunicators are all covered under different retirement programs / incentives provided by the employer. This is because telecommunicators are town employees. There is no common retirement plan directed for dispatch personnel.

LABOR LAWS

For more information, please visit www.ctdol.state.ct.us/gendocs/legislation.html

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Dispatchers are considered members of the Public Safety sector, not first responders. However, there is nothing found in writing to validate this statement.

DELAWARE

TRAINING STANDARDS

The only required training standard is the "Establishment of 9-1-1 Emergency Medical Dispatch System." PSCCs in Delaware are made up of a combination of State, County or municipal employees. Each agency or center may have specific training guidelines or requirements; they just have not reached to the level of a statewide requirement. The E911 Emergency Services Board has discussed the topic but has not pursued a state mandate. For more information, see www.delcode.delaware.gov/title16.c100/index.shtml.

P33 Certified: Delaware State Police Communications Section

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RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Combination: The State Police employees are covered under the State of Delaware retirement plan. County and Municipal agencies follow their respective retirement plans. For more information, visit www.delawarepensions.com/pensionplans.shtml.

LABOR LAWS

The State of Delaware labor laws can be found at www.delawarepersonnel.com/labor/index.shtml. Please keep in mind that a good majority of the employees are covered by established contracts. The State Police are covered through the Communications Workers of America.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

TRAINING STANDARDS

There are no legislated mandates in the District, but the center does use commercial training.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Employees are covered under the DC retirement plan unless they were employed before October 1987. If they were hired before that date, they are covered under civil service which is a federal retirement plan. For more information, please visit <http://www.dc.gov>

LABOR LAWS

For more information, please visit <http://www.dc.gov>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Employees are considered both as Public Safety employees and First Responders since they are the first point of contact for a call for service. They are also considered essential personnel.

FLORIDA

TRAINING STANDARDS

NEW! As of October 1, 2012, Florida now has mandated certification facilitated by 232 hours of training. For more information, visit www.doh.state.fl.

P33 Certified: Brevard County Sheriff's Office – Communications Center

P33 Certified: Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

NEW! Eligibility for retirement after 30 years of employment at a rate of 1.6% of salary, per year. There is no special/high risk classification. For more information visit www.myfrs.com.

LABOR LAWS

For information visit, www.stateofflorida.com/labem.html.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

NEW! Recognized as Public Safety Telecommunicators; however, there is no correlation to a public safety emergency (first) responder.

GEORGIA

TRAINING STANDARDS

Georgia has a state law requiring that "any person employed by a local government agency to receive, process or transmit public safety information and dispatch law enforcement, fire fighters, medical, and emergency management personnel..." be certified by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council. Ga. POST requires this training to be completed within the first six months of employment. O.C.G.A. 36-60-19 requires that all Comm. Officers be certified in the use of TTY (which they get as part of the Basic Comm. Class), Part B of that code section says that "on and after January 1, 1999, no monthly 9-1-1 charge provided for in Code Section 46-5-133 may be imposed for the support of any dispatch center unless such dispatch center is in compliance with the requirements of this Code section." This code section has been used to enforce the POST rules requiring certification within the first six months of employment. Further information on laws governing public safety communications in GA can be found in O.C.G.A. Title 46 Chapter 5 Article 2 Part 4. Visit <http://www.gapost.org/rules> & <http://www.lexis-nexis.com/hottopics/gacode/default.asp>.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Communications Officers are covered by the various local government policies. Most have some form of retirement through their agency; however, there is no state public safety retirement system for them.

LABOR LAWS

Labor laws can be found in Title 34 of the O.C.G.A. (<http://www.lexis-nexis.com/hottopics/gacode/default.asp>)

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

HAWAII

TRAINING STANDARDS

No training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

State Retirement. For more information, please visit <http://www4.hawaii.gov/ers/>

LABOR LAWS

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For information, visit <http://hawaii.gov/labor/>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

IDAHO

TRAINING STANDARDS

No training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators. The IECC is working on establishing those standards with the help of their PSAP Sub-Committee; The Sub-committee has put together a training manual which has been approved by the Idaho Sheriff's Association, the Idaho Chiefs of Police Association and POST Academy. The Training Manual, upon the gathering of this data, was going to press to be distributed to each PSAP in Idaho in January 2010; the PSAP Sub-Committee is developing a website where this information will be available and accessible.

P33 Certified: Ada County 911 Center

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Idaho full-time Dispatchers are covered by Idaho PERSI as is any full-time employee of any state, county or city government. For more information, visit Idaho PERSI's website at <http://www.persi.state.id.us/>

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://labor.idaho.gov/dnn/idl/laborlaws/tabid/667/default.aspx>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

ILLINOIS

TRAINING STANDARDS

No training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators.

P33 Certified: Naperville Public Safety Answering Point

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Defined benefits (mandatory participation) Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund *IMRF) can be found at <http://www.imrf.org/>. The voluntary contribution plan (457) International City/County Management Association (ICMA-RC) <http://www.icmarc.org/>

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://www.state.il.us/agencyidol/laws/laws.htm>.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

INDIANA

TRAINING STANDARDS

No training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators. A training standard related to EMD can be found in Indiana Code 16-31-3.5. For further, visit <http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title16/ar31/ch3.5.html>.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

No information provided.

LABOR LAWS

No information provided.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

IOWA

TRAINING STANDARDS

A training requirement within the first year exists. For further information visit <http://www.state.ia.us/ilea/Telecom.htm>.

P33 Certified: City of Cedar Rapids Joint Communications Agency

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

For information, visit <http://www.ipers.org/>.

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://www.iowaworkforce.org/labor/>. Links are on the lower left of the page.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

KANSAS

TRAINING STANDARDS

No training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

For information, visit www.kpers.org

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit www.dol.ks.gov.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

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KENTUCKY

TRAINING STANDARDS

Yes, there are public safety communications training standards in Kentucky. KLEC (Kentucky Law Enforcement Council) governs training for all of the state law enforcement and public safety communications. Every Full-time Telecommunicator must complete 135 hours of academy training. If a center has a NCIC terminal in it, then Telecommunicators must complete an additional 40 hours totaling 175 hours of academy training. A Full-Time Telecommunicator must complete 8 hours of in-service training every year. Those Telecommunicators who have taken the NCIC training must complete 4 hours of in-service training each year in addition to the required 8 hours of training. There are no state requirements for Part Time employees – this is left to the discretion of the center.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Public Safety Telecommunicators are employees of the local government and are covered by the state retirement program.

LABOR LAWS

For more information, please visit <http://www.labor.ky.gov/>.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Public Safety Telecommunicators in the state of Kentucky are considered Public Safety employees.

LOUISIANA

TRAINING STANDARDS

No training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Covered under the agency's retirement system.

LABOR LAWS

No information provided.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Generally, Public Safety Telecommunicators are considered "essential" personnel and are considered Public Safety employees.

MAINE

TRAINING STANDARDS

Training standards required within Maine for Public Safety Telecommunications can be found at <http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/26/title26ch0sec0.html>. See section 3-A training, basic training & continuing education. Also, <http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/25/title25sec2927.html>; see funding section for required EMD training for all Public Safety Telecommunicators.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Generally, dispatchers are covered as participating members of the state run employee retirement program. Some communities have alternate programs, may offer other benefits in lieu of state retirement. Visit <http://www.msrs.org>

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/26/title26ch0sec0.html>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Subject to debate, depending upon who you ask that question; although not clearly defined by any statute or regulation, Public Safety Telecommunicators are generally considered public safety employees and they consider themselves as the "first, first responders." In Maine they are in a changing evolution as to how they are seen in the profession. Certainly with our increasing training and certification criteria, they are getting more recognition as a true profession.

MARYLAND

TRAINING STANDARDS

Training standards are described in COMAR and are regulated and inspected by the Emergency Number Systems Board under the direction of the Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services. The legislative code number is 12.11.03.10. For further, visit www.dsd.state.md.us/comar.aspx

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Generally, in each county the people in Communications fall under their respective general county retirement plan. There may be a couple who fall under the general state employee retirement plan. There is no known differentiation between 911 operators or public safety telecommunications and all other general county employees. Different counties do provide different percentages.

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit www.dlir.state.md.us

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Yes.

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MASSACHUSETTS

TRAINING STANDARDS

The State 911 Department offers individual classes and a 6 week academy free of charge to any PSAP http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eopsterminal&L=5&L0=Home&L1=Crime+Prevention+%26+Personal+Safety&L2=Report+an+Emergency&L3=Enhanced++911&L4=Training+and+Programs&sid=Eeops&b=terminalcontent&f=setb_academy&csid=Eeops Communication personnel shall be trained and have the highest level of experience possible within available resources. Training should include, but is not limited to, the 9-1-1 Call Handling Procedures set forth in the Public Safety Answering Point Administration and Training Sections of the Massachusetts Standards, 560 CMR, Appendix AAIL 9-1-1 call takers must complete a minimum of two days of training certifying them to operate the Enhanced 9-1-1 system. The areas of training are detailed within this document at this link, the state standard for Enhanced 911 <http://www.mass.gov/Eeops/docs/setb/standards.pdf>

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Massachusetts has numerous public pension systems which are all overseen by PERAC (Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission). For more information, please visit: <http://www.mass.gov/perac/related.htm>

LABOR LAWS

For more information, please visit:

[http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=elwdagencylanding&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Government&L2=Departments+and+Divisions+\(EOLWD\)&L3=Department+of+Labor&sid=Elwd](http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=elwdagencylanding&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Government&L2=Departments+and+Divisions+(EOLWD)&L3=Department+of+Labor&sid=Elwd)

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Many are considered Public Safety employees, some are considered First Responders, there is nothing standardized or mandated at this time.

MICHIGAN

TRAINING STANDARDS

Proposed training standards are in development. For more information, visit

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/msp/Training_Recommendations_final_reports>_10-22-2007_219712_7.pdf

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

State, County, Townships, Municipal or individual authorities have quite a variety of retirement programs.

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://www.michigan.gov/dleg/0,1607,7-154-10573|35828000,00.html>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Generally yes. Again, it depends upon who they work for, but the general designation is First Responder.

MINNESOTA

TRAINING STANDARDS

No training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

The majority of Public Safety Telecommunicators are eligible to participate in PERA (Public Employee Retirement Association). For more information, please visit: www.mnpera.org

LABOR LAWS

For more information, please visit: <http://www.dli.mn.gov/main.asp>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Public Safety Telecommunicators are considered Public Safety employees. Whether or not they are considered First Responders probably varies from agency to agency.

MISSISSIPPI

TRAINING STANDARDS

The Board of Emergency Telecommunications Standards and Training (BETST) Professional Certification Policy and Procedures Manual, Mississippi defines training requirements of Public Safety Telecommunicators. For further information visit:

[http://www.dps.state.ms.us/dps/dps.nsf/allforms/65A5CA978GFD3FDD86256D2E007556A1/\\$File/BETST%20Policy%20&%20Procedures%20manual%20-%20SOS%20v2009%20-%20rev%2004-03-2009.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.dps.state.ms.us/dps/dps.nsf/allforms/65A5CA978GFD3FDD86256D2E007556A1/$File/BETST%20Policy%20&%20Procedures%20manual%20-%20SOS%20v2009%20-%20rev%2004-03-2009.pdf?OpenElement) and <http://www.dps.state.ms.us/dps/dps.nsf/divpages/ps20st-emt-requirements?OpenDocument>

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Public Safety Telecommunicators are covered by the state or local Public Safety or general government employee retirement programs. Different agencies do different things. For more information, visit <http://www.pers.state.ms.us/>.

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://www.laborlawtalk.com/archive/index.php/f-73.html>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Yes, in name only. It appears there is a self-imposed title of Public Safety; however, the same benefits available to fire and law enforcement services as part of the public safety team are not afforded to Public Safety Telecommunicators.

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MISSOURI

TRAINING STANDARDS

Training standards are applicable in Missouri and are currently under revision. For more information, visit <http://sema.dps.mo.gov/911/911Page.htm>

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

No information provided.

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://www.dolir.mo.gov/>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Not officially.

MONTANA

TRAINING STANDARDS

Training standards applicable in Montana can be found in Montana Code 7-31203. For more information, visit http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/mca_toc/7.htm

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Montana has different configurations of PSAPs. Some are under County/City and some are governed by Boards. The retirement system, for the most part, is under PERS which is a 30 year system. Some are under the SRS or Sheriff's Retirement System which provides for 20 year retirement eligibility. Montana passed a law in 2005 that included Detention Officers in the SRS. Some dispatchers who work in a center with a detention center may qualify as Detention Officers. For recent activities, see

<http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/2005/billhtml/SB0370.htm>

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://dli.mt.gov/resources/laws.asp#stlaws>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

For information, visit <http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/mcs/44/4/44-4-401.htm>

NEBRASKA

TRAINING STANDARDS

No training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators.

P33 Certified: Lincoln Emergency Communications

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

In Lincoln, a local bargaining unit negotiates salaries and benefits. Pension is considered part of compensation for comparability. The City of Lincoln matches \$2 for every \$1 the employee contributes; however City/County, at the time the information was gathered, was exploring negotiating this to a \$1 for \$1 match in future labor contracts with all of the City's bargaining units (there are three (3), plus separate pensions for both police and fire). If adopted, this would apply only to newly hired personnel.

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://www.dol.nebraska.gov/>. In addition to this, much of our salaries/benefits are governed by the Commission of Industrial Relations (CIR) – this is where comparability and other factors come into play and where disputes are settled. For additional, visit <http://www.ncir.ne.gov/>.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

NEVADA

TRAINING STANDARDS

No training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators. A Governor appointed committee was established approximately 4 years ago. It was subsequently disbanded by the Governor approximately 2 years later without ever meeting.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

For information, visit www.nvpers.org.

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit www.laborcommissioner.com.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Yes - considered Public Safety. Not considered First Responders.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

TRAINING STANDARDS

No training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Public Safety Telecommunicators are included in Group I of the NH Retirement System. For information, visit <http://www.nhrs.org/>.

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://www.labor.state.nh.us/>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Yes – considered Public Safety. Not considered First Responders.

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NEW JERSEY

TRAINING STANDARDS

Telecommunicators are required to complete a 40 hour basic communications course. If the center does EMD, telecommunicators are also responsible for EMD: 8 hour CPR and 32 hour EMD. For EMD agencies, recertification is required every 3 years with 24 hours of Continuing Telecom Education. The State Regulations indicates the EMD program must utilize EMD guidecards approved by the State Department of Health and Senior Services and must meet ASTM Standard F 1552 and follow the NHTSTA, EMD National Standard Curriculum. However, the regulation is not vendor-specific. This legislation can be found at the State Web Site <http://www.nj.gov/911/resource/reg/index.html>: 9-1-1 Emergency Telecommunication System, N.J.A.C.17:24. Specifications for training are found under 17:24-2.2 and 17:24-3.2.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

For retirement purposes, NJ falls under the general NJ government employee retirement program. Civil service employees are part of the NJ Public employees' pension system. It is not clear if municipalities that don't choose civil service are part of the same system. For more information, please visit <http://www.nj.gov/treasury/pensions>

LABOR LAWS

For information, please visit http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/wagehour/lawregs/wage_and_hour.html

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Considered Public Safety Employers.

NEW MEXICO

TRAINING STANDARDS

The New Mexico Department of Public Safety certifies Public Safety Telecommunicators within one year of their hire date. The course requires 120 hours of classroom training, written tests and two practical exams. The 911 regulations (administered by the Department of Finance & Administration) require 20 hours of continuing education every two (2) years for telecommunicators. If the agency provides Emergency Medical Dispatch, additional training requirements may apply.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

They are considered the same as general employees, not public safety and in fact this year the requirement went from 25 years of service to 30 years of service before telecommunicators are eligible to retire. For more information, visit

<http://www.pera.state.nm.us/>

LABOR LAWS

For more information, please visit <http://www.dws.state.nm.us/>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

It is agency specific, nothing statewide.

NEW YORK

TRAINING STANDARDS

Training requirements for Public Safety Telecommunicators in New York may be found at

<http://www.dos.state.ny.us/fire/911program/911notices.htm>.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

For information, visit <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/>

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://www.labor.ny.us/>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Generally considered public safety, but it depends on the agency.

NORTH CAROLINA

TRAINING STANDARDS

No training standard reportedly exists statewide and applicable to all Public Safety Telecommunicators. In North Carolina, a Telecommunicator Certification Course that is mandatory for those telecommunicators who work under the direction of a Sheriff. The course is a total 47 hours, which is covered in six days. It is offered through the NC Justice Academy, the NC Community College system and local agencies who become accredited through the NC Community College system and local agencies, who become accredited through the NC Sheriff Education and Training Standards Commission. You can read more about this at www.ncdoj.gov, click on law enforcement, and then click on Sheriff's standards on the left side of the page. In addition to the certification course, those who take that training and become "certified," as of January 1, 2007 are required to take sixteen (16) hours of mandatory in-service training. The topics and their hours change annually. The lesson plans are created by the NC Justice Academy and then disseminated to all who will deliver the training and meet the General Instructor Certification through the state of North Carolina. Those who do not take the required training from January 1 to December 31 of the given year are subject to their certification being suspended until they come into compliance.

P33 Certified: Durham Emergency Communications Center

P33 Certified: Raleigh-Wake Emergency Communications

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

In North Carolina it depends upon whether you work for a Sheriff's office, a municipality, city agency or state agency as to which kind of retirement system your monies go into. Currently, there is 30 years mandatory for public safety personnel. There has been talk about making it a 20 or 25 year retirement; however, to date that has not been approved.

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LABOR LAWS

For information, visit www.Nclabor.com

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Yes. In North Carolina, we are considered Public Safety Telecommunicators and/or Justice Officers, as referred to by statute synonymously.

NORTH DAKOTA

TRAINING STANDARDS

No defined training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Each communications center sets their own retirement policies.

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://www.nd.gov/labor>.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

OHIO

TRAINING STANDARDS

No defined training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators.

P33 Certified: Hamilton County Department of Communications

P33 Certified: Cincinnati Police Communications Section

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Most Telecommunicators employed by the public sector are covered by Ohio's Public Employees Retirement System (<https://www.opers.org>). Many larger cities (population 100,000 or greater) maintain their own retirement system.

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://www.com/ohio.gov/laws/>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

OKLAHOMA

TRAINING STANDARDS

No defined training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Oklahoma Highway Patrol Dispatchers have early retirement. Most county and local agencies do not and fit into general retirement programs. For more information, visit <http://www.ok.gov/redirect.php?link+id=401>.

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://www.ok.gov/odol/>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

OREGON

TRAINING STANDARDS

Defined training certifications applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators and managed through the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST). They are the same agency that oversee policy and fire training certifications. For more information visit, <http://www.oregon.gov/DPSST/SC/docs/Rules/259-008-0011revisedtext5-20-09.pdf>. The DPSST works closely with the Oregon Chapter of APCO in defining its statewide training requirements for Telecommunicators.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

There are a variety of governance models in Oregon. Some PSAPs are under a city or county and included in PERS or something similar. Some are "special districts" and have their own tax base; some are under the Oregon Revised Statute which is run by an intergovernmental council and not in PERS.

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://www.oregon.gov/BOLI/>. This is the link to the State of Oregon's Bureau of Labor.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Yes.

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PENNSYLVANIA

TRAINING STANDARDS

Defined training standards applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators in Pennsylvania can be located at http://www.pema.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/programs_and_services/4547/911_program/458019.

P33 Certified: Lancaster County-Wide Communications

P33 Certified: York County 9-1-1

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Depends on the employer.

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://www.dli.state.pa.us/>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Depends on the employer.

RHODE ISLAND

TRAINING STANDARDS

Yes. Telecommunicators go through a rigorous training for 4-6 months that is specific to the state of Rhode Island and is all in-house.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Telecommunicators are state employees and can retire out at 28 years. For more information, see www.ersi.org/public/help/faqs/#G

LABOR LAWS

Rhode Island follows state and federal labor laws. Collective bargaining is present here, too. For more information, see www.dlt.ri.gov/lis

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No. Telecommunicators employed at the E9-1-1 Center are under the Department of Public Safety but considered neither Public Safety nor First Responders.

SOUTH CAROLINA

TRAINING STANDARDS

Defined training standards applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators in South Carolina can be located at www.sccja.org. Training is provided through the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy 911 training.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Telecommunicators are covered under the SC State Retirement System unless an agency chooses to contribute extra to make them a part of the SC Law Enforcement Officer's retirement system. For more information, visit <http://www.retirement.sc.gov/>.

LABOR LAWS

South Carolina is a "right to work" state. For information on SC labor laws, visit <http://www.lir.state.sc.us/>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

SOUTH DAKOTA

TRAINING STANDARDS

There is a two (2) week mandatory training for new telecommunicators hosted by the Law Enforcement Training Center (LET Center). For more information, visit <http://dci.sd.gov/let/index.htm>

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

The Public Safety Telecommunicators in South Dakota are covered under the same provisions as other general government employees. For more information, visit <http://dol.sd.gov/bdcomm/dolerb/erbminute062906.pdf>

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://dol.sd.gov/>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Yes – considered public safety.

TENNESSEE

TRAINING STANDARDS

Defined training required in Tennessee for Public Safety Telecommunicators requires no less than 40 hours of training.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

For information, visit http://www.emergencydispatch.org/res_legislation.php

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit http://www.emergencydispatch.org/res_legislation.php

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

For more information, visit http://www.emergencydispatch.org/res_legislation.php

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TEXAS

TRAINING STANDARDS

Defined training requirements for Public Safety Telecommunicators in Texas are mandated through Texas Occupation Code 1701.352: 4 year training cycle 2009 to 2013: There are no minimum training hour requirements; Required Courses (Texas Occupation Code 1701.351(a-1) and 1701.352); 4 year training cycle 2009 to 2013: There are no required courses. For more information, visit http://www.tcleose.state.tx.us/content/law_enforcement_tele.cfm

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

They are usually covered by the retirement program that the city or state agency is a part of. In Texas, we have the TMRS for a lot of local government agencies. For more information, please visit: www.tmrs.org

LABOR LAWS

Texas follows federal labor laws

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Public Safety Employees

UTAH

TRAINING STANDARDS

The required certifications in Utah are BCI (for police dispatch agencies) and EMD as per the BEMS rules for dispatch center designation. Utah does have POST certification, and although it is not mandated, the majority of dispatchers in the state are certified. Some agencies thru-out the state have used APCO's CTO Certification program, but it is not mandated and each agency has trainer specifics. BEMS accepts several EMD programs (Priority Dispatch, a state system developed years ago, APCO). POST: 40 hour course initially with 20 hours annually; EMD: 12 hours annually; BCI does not have required recertification hours, but an operator must recertify every 2 years. State legislation for EMS designations and also for POST (although POST is not mandatory). When POST certification was developed, dispatchers were grandfathered in as long as they had other required certifications (EMD, BCI, and CPR). The grandfathering only applied in the first year of the certification program being implemented, and only for those who were employed at the time of the legislation passing. For additional information, visit

<http://publicsafety.utah.gov/post/portal/index.html>

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Most are covered by state retirement. There is also ICMA, depending on how they are classified. For more information, visit <http://www.urs.org>

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://www.laborcommission.utah.gov/index.html>. Most dispatch agencies work an 80 hour pay period/40 hour week. Shifts range from 8-10-12 hours and we have both full and part time dispatchers throughout the state.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Varies from agency to agency. Some depending on whether they monitor inmates may be considered "sworn" versus civilian. Again, this depends on how they are classified at their agency and what their job duties entail.

VERMONT

TRAINING STANDARDS

Defined training standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators include a "Certification." In order to be certified, candidates must 1) complete the Board's 40-hour basic telecommunicator course and achieve a passing grade on all exams, 2) complete the board's operations course and achieve a passing grade on all exams; and 3) receive CPR certification within the twelve months prior to attending the required training. Sixteen (16) hours of Continuing Education are required annually along with annual recertification of CPR. All the CTO training is under the departments' jurisdiction. Emergency communications training lasts anywhere from 4 months to one year.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Vermont 9-1-1 is a rather unique set up since we have direct involvement and oversight of the 9-1-1 call taking and call handling function statewide but we do not employ any of the call-takers. Some of our call-takers are employed by the State, some by Municipalities, some by County Government. They are mostly (if not all) union but under different jurisdictions.

LABOR LAWS

For more information, please visit: <http://www.labor.vermont.gov/>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Public Safety not first responders though many are responders with various local services.

VIRGINIA

TRAINING STANDARDS

Defined training standard for Public Safety Telecommunicators in Virginia are governed by legislative mandate and facilitated through the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). The "mandated" training is unfunded and only mandates a curriculum for law enforcement dispatching and does not include FIRE/EMS/EMD training requirements. There are no requirements for in-service or continuing education for Public Safety Telecommunicators – no additional training *ever* is required after the initial certification. The VA Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) encourages the training of dispatchers to facilitate EMD and provide an in-state accreditation program which includes a training requirement for EMD. EMD in Virginia is not required, but strongly suggested and fully supported by the OEMS. For more information, visit www.dcjs.virginia.gov.

P33 Certified: Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle County Emergency Communications Center

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P33 Certified: Stafford County Sheriff's Office Emergency Communications

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Public Safety Telecommunicators (Dispatchers) fall under the Virginia Retirement System which requires 30 years of service. For more information, visit <http://www.varetire.org/Members/Benefits/DefinedBenefit/Index.asp>. Some larger localities (Fairfax County) offer a 25 year retirement through a retirement plan offered solely through their County. Other public safety personnel, including corrections officers, are classified different and have a reduced retirement plan.

LABOR LAWS

Virginia is a 'right to work' state. For more information, see Title 16, Labor and Employment of the Virginia Administrative Code.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No. To do so would require a legislative change in statute.

WASHINGTON

TRAINING STANDARDS

There are no defined training standards reportedly existing statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators in Washington. Many follow CJTC training. For more information, visit www.cjtc.state.wa.us.

P33 Certified: Valley Communications Center

P33 Certified: North East King County Regional Public Safety Communication Agency (NORCOM)

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

For information, visit www.drs.wa.gov.

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit www.lni.wa.gov.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No.

WEST VIRGINIA

TRAINING STANDARDS

NEW! As of March 2011, legislation passed which identifies curriculum for training, albeit not mandated, it is applicable for statewide implementation. Prior to the passing of this legislation, an unsubstantiated training requirement for Public Safety Telecommunicators compliance with APCO's 40 hour course is reported. For more information, visit <http://law.justis.com/westvirginia/codes/24/wvc24-6-5.html>.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Most WV public employees are covered in some way by the Public Employee Retirement System. <http://www.wvretirement.com/> points to all public employee retirements in WV, but the first one (PERS) is the one that most have in WV.

LABOR LAWS

For more information, please visit: <http://www.wvlabor.com/newwebsite/Pages/index.html>

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

No, they are all considered Public Employees, but would get no retirement over and above that of PERS. They do not, for example, qualify under either Sheriff's or State Police Trooper retirement.

WISCONSIN

TRAINING STANDARDS

No defined training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Each hiring authority decides the retirement process. Not all dispatchers are covered under the state retirement plan, but most are.

For more information, visit <http://etf.wi.gov/>.

LABOR LAWS

For more information, please visit: http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/er/labor_standards_bureau/

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Unsure; generally considered public safety but not first responders.

WYOMING

TRAINING STANDARDS

A defined training standard reportedly exists statewide or applicable to Public Safety Telecommunicators through the Wyoming Peace Officer Standards and Training Program. For more information, visit <http://attorneygeneral.state.wy.us/post.htm>

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Telecommunicators, statewide, are covered under the Law Enforcement plan at the Wyoming Retirement System. Telecommunicators at the Wyoming Highway Patrol have their own plan within the Wyoming Retirement System. For more information, visit <http://retirement.state.wy.us/>

LABOR LAWS

For information, visit <http://doe.wyo.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

ARE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR'S CONSIDERED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS?

Yes – considered public safety employees. Not considered first responders.

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GLOSSARY

Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD): The facilitation by a public safety communications professional in providing pre-arrival medical instructions through a defined and structured program and which operations in cooperation with a local operational medical director.

Knowledge: Fundamental understanding one must have in order to perform a specific task.

National Incident Management System/Incident Command System (NIMS/ICS): An organized method to define roles, responsibilities, and standard operating procedures used to unify multiple disciplines in order to manage emergency operations under one functional organization.

Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP): A facility equipped and staffed to receive emergency and non-emergency calls requesting public safety services via telephone and other communication devices. Emergency calls are first answered, assessed, classified, and prioritized. The FCC further defines a primary PSAP as a facility to which 9-1-1 calls are routed directly from the 9-1-1 Control Office. A secondary PSAP is defined as a facility to which 9-1-1 calls are transferred from a primary PSAP.

Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC): A public safety entity (which may include a PSAP or be referred to as an Emergency Communications Center or communications center) where emergency calls for service or 9-1-1 phone calls culminate, and/or where calls for service are dispatched to public safety service providers.

Public Safety Communications Professional: See Public Safety Telecommunicator

Public Safety Telecommunicator (Telecommunicator): The individual employed by a public safety agency as the first of the first responders whose primary responsibility is to receive, process, transmit, and/or dispatch emergency and non-emergency calls for law enforcement, fire, emergency medical, and other public safety services via telephone, radio, and other communication devices.

Rapid Multi-Processing : A process unique to the public safety communications professional which requires, in order to complete job functions, the use of an enhanced level of knowledge, skills and abilities in the work place to efficiently utilize multiple technology platforms and applications concurrently. It extends to the public safety communications professional's ability to gather and relay critical information under a set of specific guidelines in which priorities change constantly and in which multiple incidents are managed simultaneously, all in a fluid manner while utilizing critical thinking skills.

Challenges Facing 9-1-1 Public Safety Communications Professionals

August 2011

ProCHRT Objectives

- Inclusion of and well-deserved recognition of the communications professional and their contribution as a member of the public safety community.
- Study professional certification and minimum training requirements throughout the country.
- Study the retirement benefit years of service for communications professionals throughout the country, outlining specific states and jurisdictions that have made changes (by improvement) and those that are in process.
- Study the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act as it pertains to scheduling of communications professionals and report findings with recommendations to include raising pertinent issues to a national level.
- Working with the APCO Call Center Standards Committee & Member Chapter Services Committees to promote the importance of local training programs becoming APCO Project 33 Training Certification Program certified compliant:
- Develop strategies and make recommendations toward promotion of the "First Responder" status of 9-1-1 Public Safety Telecommunicators.
- Recommend position titles that more aptly describe the 9-1-1 Call Taker, Law Enforcement dispatcher, Fire-Rescue dispatcher and EMS dispatcher.
- Identify those states and jurisdictions that mandate the use of life saving Emergency Medical Dispatcher pre-arrival instruction.
- Develop a toolbox for APCO members to include the following information at a minimum:
 - Legislative Resources
 - Sample legislation
 - Statistical information and resources about the profession that includes but is not limited to what other states have done; arguments to bolster your cause; key statements/words to include in reports and speeches; and, testimonials
 - How to identify key advocate/champions for your effort such as local, state and federal leaders (*determine who has a public safety background*); other related industry leaders (e.g. *Fire, EMS and Law Enforcement associations*); employee and labor associations; and, legislative consultants
 - How to estimate costs of and funding sources for the hiring, training and retention of staff (*link to APCO Project RETAINS*); estimate how many employees will be impacted (with substantiation for your argument); causes, consequences and results of lawsuits;
 - Develop feasible alternative models for funding in order to increase acceptance, i.e., voluntary member contribution, etc.
 - Public & Media Resources
 - Public Service Announcement
 - Short educational video about PSC
 - Sample press release

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- One-page document to advocate statewide efforts related to our objective and suggestions of locations to disseminate this information
 - Information on how to effectively brand a message pursuant to the actions taken and followed by the association (i.e. APCO's branding efforts)
 - How to develop and deliver an effective short spiel (i.e. elevator speech)
- Complete a report to the industry and those with a vested interest in the human factor of public safety communications to include the findings of the research along with recommendations on a path forward.

Challenges Facing 9-1-1 Public Safety Communications Professionals

August 2011

THE ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC-SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS OFFICIALS - INTERNATIONAL

CORE PRINCIPLES MANIFESTO

THE ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC-SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS OFFICIALS - INTERNATIONAL, INC. (APCO) IS THE WORLD'S LARGEST AND OLDEST PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION, REPRESENTING AN INDUSTRY OF OVER 200,000 PROFESSIONALS. AS THE LEADING PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION WE BELIEVE, STAND FOR, ADVOCATE AND/OR SUPPORT:

- THAT EVERY STATE MANDATE AND/OR ADOPT STANDARD CRITERION FOR 9-1-1 PUBLIC SAFETY CALL TAKER AND DISPATCHER TRAINING, USING APCO ANS - MINIMUM TRAINING STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS AS A BASELINE, ACCREDITED BY AMERICAN NATIONAL STANDARDS INSTITUTE (ANSI), FOR CERTIFICATION AND RE-CERTIFICATION TO MAINTAIN THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILL AND ABILITY.
- THAT EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH (EMD) PRE-ARRIVAL MEDICAL PROTOCOLS ARE MANDATED AND/OR ADOPTED BY EVERY STATE SO THAT EVERY CITIZEN REQUESTING AN EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE (EMS) RESPONSE IS PROVIDED APPROPRIATE MEDICAL ADVICE WHILE EMS ASSISTANCE IS EN ROUTE.
- THAT 9-1-1 PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS PERSONNEL SHOULD BE PAID A FAIR AND EQUITABLE WAGE AND RECEIVE BENEFITS COMMENSURATE WITH THE MISSION CRITICAL LIFESAVING NATURE OF THE JOB THEY PERFORM EACH DAY, WHILE WORKING COHESIVELY IN PROVIDING SERVICES TO AND IN SUPPORT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIRE-RESCUE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS.
- THAT ADEQUATE RADIO SPECTRUM OF ALL TYPE (NARROWBAND, BROADBAND, ETC.) IS MADE AVAILABLE TO PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES TO FULFILL THEIR MISSION AND THE NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF COMMUNITIES AND CITIZENS THEY SERVE AND PROTECT.
- THAT 9-1-1 FEES/TAXES COLLECTED FROM THE PUBLIC ARE USED EXCLUSIVELY IN SUPPORT OF 9-1-1 PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS AND THAT FUNDS COLLECTED ARE NOT DIVERTED TO OTHER PURPOSES.
- THAT TRAINING, OPERATIONAL AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS ARE UTILIZED AND THAT THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS STANDARDS CONTINUE TO BE DEVELOPED IN SUPPORT OF THE PROFESSION.

Members of the Public Safety Committee:

The dedicated staff at the Brown County Public Safety Communications Center would like you to consider the dramatic affects of the new Chapter 4 rewrite on our dispatch center.

We have been advised that the purpose of the Chapter 4 changes is to combine all 19 Brown County Departments in an attempt for more consistency throughout the County. We believe this is not possible because our center operates as an emergency center and is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The attempt to achieve parity among all departments costs our department and employees a much greater sacrifice than any of the Monday-Friday, 8:00-4:30 employees.

We have lost between 7 ½ - 15 days vacation, over-time for hours worked over 8 hours in a day, shift differential and longevity pay. The benefits of this job are a key component to attracting and keeping quality employees. We have had several employees leave since this has all come about, and many more are seeking other employment at this time. It cost tens of thousands of dollars to hire and train new employees to do this job, and the resulting costs of this will be staggering!

The vacation time lost is a major issue. Vacation days were taken from senior employees and given to new and less senior employees. This still results in an opening that must be filled and results in no cost savings!

In the past, Brown County has made significant progress toward establishing one of the finest dispatch centers in the state. We are extremely proud of our department and the job we do. We provide a crucial service to the citizens of this county and take our responsibilities to the citizens and all the police, fire and rescue agencies we represent very seriously. We do not want to see anything change the high level of service we currently provide. It is imperative that we adequately compensate our employees to ensure that excellence is maintained.

We are asking the committee to please consider the special needs and requirements of our positions. We certainly should be classified as emergency personnel. We are all basically "on-call" and subject to order in and hold over 4 hours before and after each of our shifts. Our positions must be filled at all times, 24 hours a day – as all emergency 911 centers are. We are requesting that you re-evaluate the decision to classify us in the same manner as Monday-Friday employees.

Thank you.

Approximate cost to train a new employee completely

15 people no longer work in this department since 01/01/11

On average, each person should know 4 positions

On average, each position takes 3 months of training

There are 20 work days per month with 8 hours per day

To learn 1 position takes approximately 480 hours

To learn 4 positions takes approximately 1920 hours

Using \$20/hour for both trainer and trainee, it would cost approximately \$76,800 per person to train at 4 positions

To train 15 people at 4 positions would cost approximately \$1,152,000

This would not include the overtime created by the vacancies or the cost of specialty classes. I would also assume there would be additional cost to HR and department management for the hiring process.

Q. How much does it cost to train a dispatcher?

A. I think the question you're really asking is, "How much did we spend when a dispatcher leaves just after we finished training him/her?" Well, the basic question is pretty simple to figure out, based on your local pay rates-- we've used the national average from our Job Openings page and training period of six months--plug in your own cost figures.

- pay of the dispatcher in training x 6 months = \$14,268
- pay of trainer = \$14,981 (+5% bonus)
- pay for dispatcher to fill empty position of trainer = \$21,402 (time and one-half overtime)
- miscellaneous overtime for trainer = \$983 (2 hours per week)
- miscellaneous supplies (books, binders, etc.) = \$100
- supervisor admin time = \$1,081 (2 hours per week, +10% pay step)
- Total = \$52,815

Note that this does **not** include the cost of overtime to fill the empty position the trainee will eventually fill. It also doesn't include the pay of anyone assisting in the training, such as firefighters, officers or paramedics. As mentioned above, if a trainee drops out after the training is completed, you'll really end up adding this person's cost to the cost of the **next** person you train. If you end up training **four** people to get **one** dispatcher who stays on, you've spent over \$200,000 for one position. Yikes!